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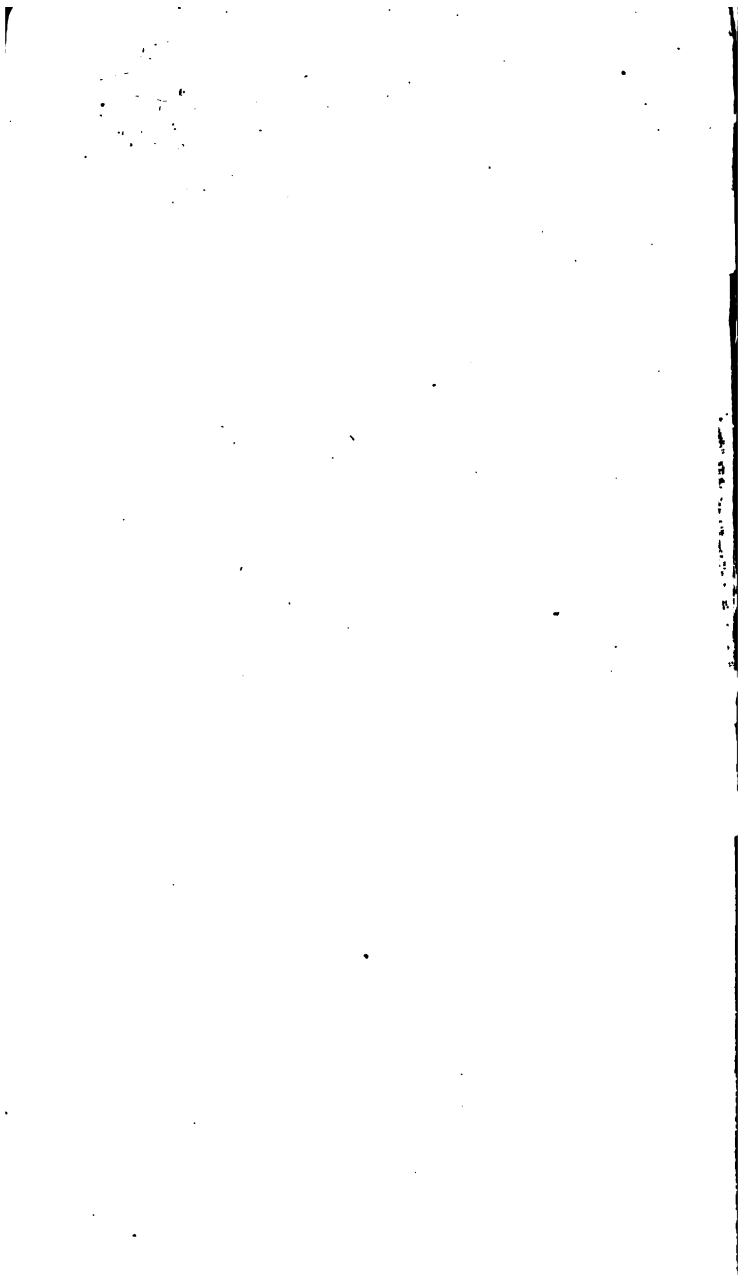
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*Wm. C. Hudson. Aug 1874.*

# MILTON'S SAMSON AGONISTES

AND

## LYCIDAS.

WITH

NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES

ETC.

ADAPTED FOR USE IN TRAINING COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS.

BY THE

REV. JOHN HUNTER, M.A.

Instructor of Candidates for the Civil Service and other Public Examinations.

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## PREFACE.

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THE *Samson Agonistes* was, in all probability, the last poem of any considerable length which Milton wrote; and it seems equally probable that the *Lycidas* was the latest of his juvenile poems. This annotated edition of these works is published as a sequel to the similar editions of *Paradise Lost*, Books I. and II., and *Comus*, *L'Allegro*, and *Il Penseroso*; and will, it is hoped, be as favourably received.

We have elsewhere observed that, on account of the long interval between the composition of Milton's juvenile poems and that of his *Paradise Lost*, he is both an ancient and a modern poet. In the present volume he will be found to manifest each of these characters, *Lycidas* having been written in 1637, and *Samson Agonistes* in 1671.

In our notes on the latter poem, which we have placed first on account of its length, it will be seen that we have given a great amount of grammatical illustration. In this department we have endeavoured to render useful service to those candidates for public examination who may be required to show skill in analysing the grammatical structure of Milton's poetry; for nowhere is the utterance of his muse more involved and elliptical, nowhere does it present



greater difficulty for the application of the principles and rules of English grammar, than in the *Samson Agonistes*. Several passages which on this account, we think, have hitherto been misapprehended, will, it is hoped, be found here correctly interpreted.

REMARKS OF VARIOUS AUTHORS  
ON  
MILTON'S SAMSON AGONISTES.

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‘It is required by Aristotle to the perfection of a tragedy, and is equally necessary to every species of regular composition, that it should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. “The beginning,” says he, “is that which has nothing necessarily previous, but to which that which follows is naturally consequent; the end, on the contrary, is that which by necessity, or at least according to the common course of things, succeeds something else, but which implies nothing consequent to itself; the middle is connected on one side to something that naturally goes before, and on the other to something that naturally follows it.”

‘The tragedy of *Samson Agonistes* has been celebrated as the second work of the great author of *Paradise Lost*, and opposed with all the confidence of triumph to the dramatic performances of other nations. It contains, indeed, just sentiments, maxims of wisdom, and oracles of piety, and many passages written with the ancient spirit of choral poetry, in which there is a just and pleasing mixture of Seneca’s moral declamation with the wild enthusiasm of the Greek writers. It is therefore worthy of examination, whether a performance, thus illuminated with genius and enriched with learning, is composed according to the indispensable laws of Aristotelian criticism; and, omitting at present all other considerations, whether it exhibits a beginning, a middle, and an end.

‘The beginning is undoubtedly beautiful and proper, opening with a graceful abruptness, and proceeding naturally to a mournful recital of facts necessary to be known. The soliloquy of Samson is interrupted by a Chorus, or company of men of his own tribe, who condole his miseries, extenuate his fault, and conclude with a solemn vindication of Divine Justice. So that, at the conclusion of the first act, there is no design laid, no discovery made, nor any disposition formed towards the subsequent event.

‘In the second act, Manoah, the father of Samson, comes to seek his son ; and, being shown him by the Chorus, breaks out into lamentations of his misery, and comparisons of his present with his former state ; representing to him the ignominy which his religion suffers by the festival this day celebrated in honour of Dagon, to whom the idolaters ascribed his overthrow. Samson, touched with the reproach, makes a reply equally penitential and pious, which his father considers as the effusion of prophetic confidence.

‘This part of the dialogue, as it might tend to animate or exasperate Samson, cannot, I think, be censured as wholly superfluous ; but the succeeding dispute, in which Samson contends to die, and which his father breaks off, that he may go to solicit his release, is only valuable for its own beauties, and has no tendency to introduce any thing that follows it.

‘The next event of the drama is the arrival of Dalila, with all her graces, artifices, and allurements. This produces a dialogue, in a very high degree elegant and instructive, from which she retires, after she has exhausted her persuasions, and is no more seen or heard of ; nor has her visit any effect but that of raising the character of Samson.

‘In the fourth act enters Harapha, the giant of Gath, whose name had never been mentioned before, and who has now no other motive of coming than to see the man whose strength and actions are so loudly celebrated. Samson challenges him to the combat ; and, after an interchange of reproaches, elevated by repeated defiances on one side, and embittered by contemptuous insults on the other, Harapha retires ; we then hear it determined by Samson and the Chorus that no consequence, good or bad, will proceed from their interview.

'At last, in the fifth act, appears a messenger from the lords assembled at the festival of Dagon, with a summons by which Samson is required to come and entertain them with some proof of his strength. Samson, after a short expostulation, dismisses him with a firm and absolute refusal; but during the absence of the messenger, having a while defended the propriety of his conduct, he at last declares himself moved by a secret impulse to comply, and utters some dark presages of a great event to be brought to pass by his agency, under the direction of Providence. While Samson is conducted off by the messenger, his father returns with hopes of success in his solicitation, upon which he confers with the Chorus till their dialogue is interrupted, first by a shout of triumph, and afterwards by screams of horror and agony. As they stand deliberating where they shall be secure, a man who had been present at the show enters, and relates how Samson, having prevailed on his guide to suffer him to lean against the main pillars of the theatrical edifice, tore down the roof upon the spectators and himself. This is undoubtedly a just and regular catastrophe; and the poem therefore has a beginning and an end which Aristotle himself could not have disapproved; but it must be allowed to want a middle, since nothing passes between the first act and the last, that either hastens or delays the death of Samson. The whole drama, if its superfluities were cut off, would scarcely fill a single act; yet this is the tragedy which ignorance has admired, and bigotry applauded.

'The versification is in the dialogue much more smooth and harmonious than in the parts allotted to the Chorus, which are often so harsh and dissonant, as scarce to preserve, whether the lines end with or without rhymes, any appearance of metrical regularity.'—JOHNSON'S *Rambler*.

'When I remarked that Jonson, in his comedy of *The Fox*, was a close copier of the ancients, it occurred to me to say something upon the celebrated drama of *Samson Agonistes*; which, though less beholden to the Greek poets in its dialogue than the comedy above mentioned, is in all other particulars as complete an imitation of the Ancient Tragedy as the distance of times and the difference of languages will admit of.

'It is professedly *built according to ancient rule and example*; and the author, by taking Aristotle's definition of tragedy for his motto, fairly challenges the critic to examine and compare it by that test. His close adherence to the model of the Greek tragedy is in nothing more conspicuous than in the simplicity of his diction; in this particular he has curbed his fancy with so tight a hand that, knowing as we do the fertile vein of his genius, we cannot but lament the fidelity of his imitation; for there is a harshness in the metre of his Chorus which to a certain degree seems to border upon pedantry and affectation; he premises that *the measure is indeed of all sorts*, but I must take leave to observe, that in some places it is no measure at all, or such at least as the ear will not patiently endure, nor which any recitation can make harmonious. By casting out of his composition the strophe and antistrophe, those stanzas which the Greeks appropriated to singing, or, in one word, by making his Chorus monostrophic, he has robbed it of that lyric beauty which he was capable of bestowing in the highest perfection.

'The principal, and in effect the only objection, which he (Dr. Johnson) states, is that *the poem wants a middle, since nothing passes between the first act and the last that either hastens or delays the death of Samson*. Simple it is from first to last, simple perhaps to a degree of coldness in some of its parts; but to say that nothing passes between the first act and the last which *hastens or delays the death of Samson* is not correct, because the very incidents are to be found which conduce to the catastrophe, and but for which it could not have come to pass.

'Of the character, I may say in few words, that Samson possesses all the terrific majesty of Prometheus chained, the mysterious distress of Oedipus, and the pitiable wretchedness of Philoctetes. His properties, like those of the first, are something above human; his misfortunes, like those of the second, are derivable from the pleasure of Heaven, and involved in oracles; his condition, like that of the last, is the most abject which human nature can be reduced to from a state of dignity and splendour.

'Of the catastrophe there remains only to remark, that it is of unparalleled majesty and terror.'—CUMBERLAND'S *Observer*.

‘Of the style of this poem, it is to be remarked that it is often inexact and almost ungrammatical; and of the metre, that it is very licentious—*both* with design and the most consummate judgment. An irregular construction carries with it an air of negligence, well suited to this drama, and yet prevents the expression from falling into vulgarity; and a looseness of measure gives grace and ease to the tragic dialogue. The modern critics of this poet are perpetually tampering with his careless expression, careless numbers, &c., unconscious that both were the effect of art.’—HURD.

‘*Samson Agonistes* is the only tragedy that Milton finished, though he sketched out the plans of several. And we may suppose that he was determined to the choice of this particular subject by the similitude of his own circumstances to those of Samson, blind among the Philistines. This I conceive to be the last of his poetical pieces; \* and it is written in the very spirit of the ancients, and equals, if not exceeds, any of the most perfect tragedies which were ever exhibited on the Athenian stage when Greece was in its glory.’—NEWTON.

\* It was first published, along with *Paradise Regained*, in 1671.

REMARKS OF VARIOUS AUTHORS  
ON  
MILTON'S LYCIDAS.

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'OF *Lycidas*, the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers displeasing. What beauty there is we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images. It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion; for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of rough *Satyrs and Fauns with cloven heel*. Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief.

'In this poem there is no nature, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting; whatever images it can supply are long ago exhausted; and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Harvey, that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labours and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines?—

We drove a-field, and both together heard  
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,  
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

We know that they never drove a-field, and that they had no flocks to batten; and, though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and

remote that it is never sought, because it cannot be known when it is found.

'Among the flocks, and copses, and flowers, appear the heathen deities: Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, such as a college easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping; and how one god asks another what is become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves, will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises, will confer no honour.

'This poem has yet a grosser fault. With these trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverent combinations.'  
—JOHNSON.

'Dr. Johnson observes, that *Lycidas* is filled with the heathen deities, and a long train of mythological imagery such as a college easily supplies. But it is such also as even the court itself could now have easily supplied. The public diversions, and books of all sorts, and from all sorts of writers, more especially compositions in poetry, were at this time overrun with classical pedantries. But what writer of the same period has made these obsolete fictions the vehicle of so much fancy and poetical description? How beautifully has he applied this sort of allusion to the Druidical rocks of Denbighshire, to Mona, and the fabulous books of Deva! It is objected that its pastoral form is disgusting. But this was the age of pastoral; and yet *Lycidas* has but little of the bucolic cant now so fashionable. The Satyrs and Fauns are but just mentioned. If any trite rural topics occur, how are they heightened!

'In this piece there is perhaps more poetry than sorrow. But let us read it for its poetry. It is true that passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of *rough Satyrs with cloven heel*. But poetry does this: and in the hands of Milton does it with a peculiar and irresistible charm.



‘Dr. Johnson censures Milton for his allegorical mode of telling that he and Lycidas studied together, under the fictitious images of rural employments, in which, he says, there can be no tenderness; and prefers Cowley’s lamentation of the loss of Harvey, the companion of his labours and the partner of his discoveries. We know that Milton and King were not *nursed on the same hill*; that they did not *feed the same flock, by fountain, shade, or rill*; and that *rough Satyrs and Fauns with cloven heel* never danced to their *rural ditties*. But who hesitates a moment for the application? Nor are such ideas more untrue, certainly not less far-fetched and unnatural, than when Cowley says, that he and Harvey studied together every night with such unremitting diligence that the twin-stars of Leda, so *famed for love*, looked down upon the twin-students with wonder *from above*.

‘Our author has also been censured for mixing religious disputes with pagan and pastoral ideas. But he had the authority of Mantuan and Spenser, now considered as models in this way of writing. Let me add, that our poetry was not yet purged from its Gothic combinations; nor had legitimate notions of discrimination and propriety so far prevailed as sufficiently to influence the growing improvements of English composition. These irregularities and incongruities must not be tried by modern criticism.’—WARTON.

‘I wish, indeed, that the fictions of heathenism had not here been mingled with what is sacred; particularly that, after the sublime intimation from Scripture of Angels *wiping the tears for ever from the eyes of Lycidas*, Lycidas, thus beatified, had not been converted into the classical *Genius of the Shore*.

‘The rhymes and numbers, which Dr. Johnson condemns, appear to me as eminent proofs of the poet’s judgment; exhibiting in their varied and arbitrary disposition an ease and gracefulness which infinitely exceed the formal couplets, or alternate rhymes, of modern elegy. Lamenting also the prejudice which has pronounced *Lycidas* to be vulgar and disgusting, I shall never cease to consider this monody as the sweet effusion of a most poetic and tender mind; entitled, as

well by its beautiful melody as by the frequent grandeur of its sentiments and language, to the utmost enthusiasm of admiration.'—TODD.

[Edward King, the subject of this poem, was a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, to which Milton also belonged. He was the son of Sir John King, Secretary for Ireland. At the age of twenty-five, he was travelling, in very calm weather, from Chester to Ireland, on a visit to his friends, when the vessel, which appears to have been a very crazy one, struck on a rock, not far from the English coast, and suddenly went down, with all on board, not a soul escaping. This was in August 1637. King was much respected at Cambridge for his piety and learning, and wrote several Latin poems of considerable merit. His death was so much lamented by his college friends, that they got together a collection of tributary verses honouring his memory, and published it at Cambridge in 1638. It consisted of 3 Greek, 19 Latin, and 13 English poems, nearly all by different authors: and last in the collection was the monody entitled *Lycidas*, subscribed with the initials 'I. M.' This poem was written when Milton was 29 years of age; and of all his minor poems, may perhaps be ranked as inferior only to *Comus*.

Milton designed to give a pastoral character to the piece; and the poetic title chosen for its subject was suggested by the frequent occurrence of the name in Virgil's *Eclogues*, and especially by what Theocritus, in his 7th Idyll, wrote of a *Lycidas*, dear to the Muses, and renowned among shepherds for his skill in music.

The reader of *Lycidas* must not seek in its allegorical descriptions a general correspondence with facts. The author of the poem is to be imagined such a one as the poem describes him—one who was 'nursed upon the self-same hill' with *Lycidas*, and who had 'fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill;' for in these words Milton feigns quite as much as when he introduces satyrs and fauns dancing to their 'rural ditties.'—ED.]



# SAMSON AGONISTES.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

*Τραγωδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, κ.τ.λ.—ARISTOT. Poet. cap. vi.*

*Tragedia est imitatio actionis serie, etc. per misericordiam et  
metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.*



## OF THAT SORT OF DRAMATIC POEM WHICH IS CALLED TRAGEDY.

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems; therefore said by Aristotle to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such-like passions, that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion; for so, in physic, things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours. Hence philosophers and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 *Cor.* xv. 33; and Paræus, commenting on the *Revelation*, divides the whole book as a tragedy, into acts distinguished each by a chorus of heavenly harpings and song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have laboured not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious, than before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Cæsar also had begun his *Ajax*, but, unable to please his own judgement with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca, the philosopher, is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a Father of the Church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which is entitled *Christ Suffering*. This is mentioned to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common interludes; happening through the poet's

error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath been counted absurd; and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient Tragedy use no prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence, or explanation, that which Martial calls an epistle, in behalf of this tragedy, coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much beforehand may be epistled; that Chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the Ancients and Italians are rather followed, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the Chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks Monostrophic, or rather Apolymenon, without regard had to Strophe, Antistrophe, or Epode, which were a kind of stanzas framed only for the music, then used with the Chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material; or, being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be called Allceostropha. Division into act and scene referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended) is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the style and uniformity, and that commonly called the plot, whether intricate or explicit—which is nothing indeed but such œconomy, or disposition of the fable as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum—they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write tragedy. The circumscription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is according to ancient rule and best example within the space of twenty-four hours.

## THE PERSONS.

SAMSON.

MANOA, *the father of Samson.*DALILA, *his wife.*HARAPHA *of Gath.*

PUBLIC OFFICER.

MESSENGER.

. CHORUS OF DANITES.

*The Scene before the Prison in GAZA.*



## THE ARGUMENT.

SAMSON, made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common workhouse, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistian lords for Samson's redemption; who in the meanwhile is visited by other persons; and lastly by a public officer, to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence. He at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come: at length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him. The Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope, to procure ere long his son's deliverance; in the midst of which discourse a Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterward more distinctly, relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the tragedy ends.

## SAMSON AGONISTES.\*

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SAMSON, *attendant leading him.*

A LITTLE onward lend thy guiding hand  
To these dark steps, a little further on ;  
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade.  
There I am wont to sit, when any chance  
Relieves me from my task of servile toil, 5  
Daily in the common prison else enjoined me ;  
Where I, a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw  
The air imprisoned also, close and damp,  
Unwholesome draught. But here I feel amends,  
The breath of heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet, 10  
With day-spring born ; here leave me to respire.

This day a solemn feast the people hold  
To Dagon their sea-idol, and forbid  
Laborious works—unwillingly this rest  
Their superstition yields me ;—hence, with leave 15  
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek  
This unfrequented place to find some ease,—  
Ease to the body some, none to the mind

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\* *Agonistes.*] A Greek term signifying the *athlete*.

4. *Wont.*] This is the past partic. of the Saxon verb *wunian*, which signified to dwell, to be accustomed.

12. *This day, &c.*] Here the attendant is supposed to have withdrawn ; and Samson, in a

soliloquy, is made to explain the story on which the drama is founded. This is in imitation of the Greek tragedians.

13. *Dagon, their sea-idol.*] This god of the Philistines was half man, half fish. See *Paradise Lost*, i. 462.

From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm  
 Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone 20  
 But rush upon me thronging, and present  
 Times past, what once I was, and what am now.  
 Oh, wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold  
 Twice by an Angel? who at last, in sight  
 Of both my parents, all in flames ascended 25  
 From off the altar, where an offering burned,  
 As in a fiery column charioting  
 His godlike presence, and from some great act  
 Or benefit revealed to Abraham's race.  
 Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed, 30  
 As of a person separate to God,  
 Designed for great exploits? if I must die

21. *But rush.*] We have here an involved construction, viz., *that, no sooner found alone but, rush upon me*; where *found alone* describes *me*, and yet cannot in analysis be placed after the verb *rush* because shut between the expressions *no sooner* and *but*, which are introductory to that verb. Let us call the whole expression between *that* and *rush* adverbial to *rush*; for it is made so by the words *no sooner but*, and would equally have to be considered adverbial if regarded as a clause of the nominative absolute—*I being no sooner found but*.

22. *What once I was.*] This is an objective noun clause to *present*. The pronoun *what* is in strict construction nominative after the verb *was*.

23. *Foretold twice.*] First to his mother alone, then to his parents together. See Judges, xiii.

26. *From off.*] For *off from*.

The adverbs *out* and *forth* are also frequently thus used after *from* in poetry. See ll. 922, 1707.

27. *A fiery column.*] The angel charioted up to heaven in a column of fire is an idea suggested by the account of Elijah's translation, 2 Kings, ii. 11.

28. *And from.*] That is, *and ascended as from*. The preposition is here used for *after*, as *ex* or *ab* in Latin.

31. *Separate.*] Set apart. Here used for the perf. partic. *separated*, a species of abbreviation frequent in our early writers, See l. 589.

Returned the wiser or the more instructed.—*Par. Reg.* l. 439.

What I can do or offer is suspect.—*Do. li.* 399.

Before I be convict by course of law.—*Shaksp. Rich. III.* l. 4.

For first was he contract to Lady Lucy.—*Do. iii.* 7.

So in the last scene of Shakspere's *Midsummer Night's Dream* we find *create* for *created*, and *consecrate* for *consecrated*.

Betrayed, captived, and, both my eyes put out,  
 Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze,  
 To grind in brazen fetters under task 35  
 With this Heaven-gifted strength,—O glorious strength !—  
 Put to the labour of a beast, debased  
 Lower than bonds slave ! Promise was that I  
 Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver :—  
 Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him 40  
 Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with alaves,  
 Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.—  
 Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt  
 Divine prediction. What if all foretold  
 Had been fulfilled but through mine own default ! 45  
 Whom have I to complain of but myself?  
 Who this high gift of strength committed to me—  
 In what part lodged how easily bereft me—  
 Under the seal of silence could not keep,

33. *Both my eyes put out.* That is, *being put*. This is a clause of the nominative absolute, adverbial to the clause forming the next line.

35. *To grind.* This infinitive is governed by the passive participle *made*.

36. *Heaven-gifted.* Gifted has not here its ordinary meaning of *endowed with gifts*, but signifies *given as a gift*. The noun *heaven* is governed by the preposition *by* understood : compare *self-taught* = taught by self, *world-renowned* = renowned throughout the world, *world-wide* = wide equally with the world. This use of the noun is adverbial.

37. *Put.* This participle describes, not the noun *strength*, but the pronoun *I*; the expres-

sion 'O glorious strength!' being parenthetical and ironical.

45. *Had.* Would have.  
*But through, &c.* Compare the words of Satan in *Par. Reg.* iii. 354:—

Prediction still means:  
 In all things and all men, supposes  
 Without means need, what it predicts  
 revokes.

The expression 'but through mine own default' is elliptical for *but through mine own default has not been fulfilled*. A grammatical analysis, however, the expression as it stands may be described as adverbial to *fulfilled*.

48. *In what part lodged, &c.* How easily bereft, or reft from, me in that part in which it was lodged.

But weakly to a woman must reveal it, 50  
 O'ercome with importunity and tears.  
 O impotence of mind, in body strong !  
 But what is strength without a double share  
 Of wisdom ? vast, unwieldy, burdensome,  
 Proudly secure, yet liable to fall 55  
 By weakest subtleties ; not made to rule,  
 But to subserve where wisdom bears command.  
 God, when he gave me strength, to shew withal  
 How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.  
 But peace ! I must not quarrel with the will 60  
 Of highest dispensation, which herein  
 Haply had ends above my reach to know :  
 Suffices that to me strength is my bane,  
 And proves the source of all my miseries ;  
 So many and so huge, that each apart 65  
 Would ask a life to wail ; but chief of all,  
 O loss of sight ! of thee I most complain,  
 Blind among enemies. O worse than chains,  
 Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age !  
 Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct, 70  
 And all her various objects of delight

58. *To shew withal, &c.*] That he might show at the same time, &c., an infinitive clause adverbial to the clause following.

62. *Above my reach to know.*] Which it is above my reach to know, or, to know which is above my reach : an adjective clause to *ends*.

63. *Suffices, &c.*] 'That to me strength is,' &c., suffices.

64. *Proves the source.*] A neuter verb followed by a nominative.

66. *Ask.*] Here used in the obsolete sense of *require*, so Shaksp. *Mids. N. Dr.* i. 2, 'That

will ask some tears in the true performing of it.' *K. Rich. II.* ii. 1, 'These great affairs do ask some charge,' Ben Jonson's *Song*, 'Drink to me only, &c.' 'The thirst that from the soul doth rise doth ask a drink divine.' Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*, 'And all this asketh leisure to enquire.'

*Chief.*] Chief misery.

70. *The prime work.*] The first work.

71. *Her.*] Milton uses *her* for *its*, when the old neuter possessive *his* would not harmonize well with the idea for which it would

Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased,  
 Inferior to the vilest now become  
 Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me :  
 They creep, yet see; I, dark in light, exposed 75  
 To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,  
 Within doors, or without, still as a fool,  
 In power of others, never in my own;  
 Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.  
 O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon, 80  
 Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse,  
 Without all hope of day !  
 O first-created beam, and thou great Word,  
 Let there be light, and light was over all,  
 Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree? 85  
 The sun to me is dark  
 And silent, as the moon  
 When she deserts the night,  
 Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.  
 Since light so necessary is to life— 90  
 And almost life itself, if it be true  
 That light is in the soul,

be pronominal. See *Par. Lost*, i. 591, 'His form had not yet lost all her original brightness.' Compare Psalm cxxxvii. 6.

72. *Annulled*.] Annihilated; that is, annihilated to me.

73. *Inferior*.] This adjective relates to the pronoun in l. 70.

77. *Still*.] Always: a usual meaning in our old literature.

*As a fool in power of others*.] In a condition similar to that of a fool who requires to be directed by others.

80. *Dark*.] Dark condition.

85. *Thy prime decree*.] Of light, the object of thy first decree

or ordination.

87. *Silent*.] This epithet perhaps has reference to the Psalmist's language, 'Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.' Ps. xix. 2.

88. *When she deserts the night*.] When she ceases to illuminate the night, being arrived at her place of conjunction, between the earth and the sun, and having her illuminated side wholly turned away from the earth.

89. *Interlunar*.] Between moon and moon.

She all in every part—why was the sight  
 To such a tender ball as the eye confined,  
 So obvious, and so easy to be quenched? 95  
 And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,  
 That she might look at will through every pore?  
 Then had I not been thus exiled from light,  
 As in the land of darkness, yet in light,  
 To live a life half dead, a living death, 100  
 And buried; but Oh, yet more miserable!  
 Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave;  
 Buried, yet not exempt,  
 By privilege of death and burial,  
 From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs; 105  
 But made hereby obnoxious more  
 To all the miseries of life,  
 Life in captivity  
 Among inhuman foes.—  
 But who are these? for with joint pace I hear 110  
 The tread of many feet steering this way;  
 Perhaps my enemies, who come to stare  
 At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,—  
 Their daily practice to afflict me more.  
*Chorus.* This, this is he; softly a while; 115  
 Let us not break in upon him.  
 O change beyond report, thought, or belief!  
 See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,

95. *Obvious.*] Directly in the way; exposed.

96. *As feeling.*] As the sense of touch is.

102. *Myself.*] Myself being. A nominative absolute.

114. *Their daily practice, &c.*] Which is their daily practice, in order to afflict me more. The infinitive clause 'to afflict,' &c. is adverbial to 'insult.'

118. *Diffused.*] Extended: an adaptation from the Latin. So Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 423, '*Fusus humi, totoque ingens extenditur antro;*' and Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, III. iii. 8, '*Fusaque erant toto languida membra toro.*' Compare Spenser, *F. Q. I.* vii. 7,

Yet goodly court he made still to his dame,  
*Poured out* in looseness on the grassy ground.

With languished head unpropt,  
 As one past hope, abandoned, 120  
 And by himself given over,  
 In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds  
 O'er-worn and soiled.  
 Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he?  
 That heroic, that renowned, 125  
 Irresistible Samson, whom unarmed  
 No strength of man or fiercest wild beast could withstand;  
 Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid;  
 Ran on embattled armies clad in iron,  
 And, weaponless himself, 130  
 Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery  
 Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass,  
 Chalybean tempered steel, and frock of mail  
 Adamantean proof.  
 But safest he who stood aloof, 135  
 When insupportably his foot advanced,  
 In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,  
 Spurned them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite  
 Fled from his lion ramp; old warriors turned  
 Their plated backs under his heel, 140  
 Or grovelling soiled their crested helmets in the dust.  
 Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,  
 The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,  
 A thousand foreskins fell, the flower of Palestine,

120. *Past hope.*] A preposition phrase, adjectival to *one*.

127. *Or fiercest.*] Or of fiercest.

133. *Chalybean.*] The Chalybes were a people of Pontus in Asia Minor, who were famous as workers of iron.

134. *Adamantean proof.*] Of adamantean proof.

136. *Insupportably, &c.*] His

foot, being irresistibly advanced So Spenser, *F. Q.*, I. vii. 11:—

When the knight he apted, he gan advance  
 With huge force and insupportable main

139. *Ramp.*] Spring. See Judges xiv. 19.

142. *With what, &c.*] The objective to *with* is the noun clause following it. *Weapon* is nominative to *came*.



In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day. 145  
 Then by main force pulled up, and on his shoulders bore,  
 The gates of Azza, post and massy bar,  
 Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old,—  
 No journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so,—  
 Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up heaven. 150  
 Which shall I first bewail,  
 Thy bondage or lost sight?  
 Prison within prison,  
 Inseparably dark.  
 Thou art become—O worst imprisonment!— 155  
 The dungeon of thyself; thy soul—  
 Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain—  
 Imprisoned now indeed,  
 In real darkness of the body dwells,  
 Shut up from outward light, 160  
 To incorporate with gloomy night;  
 For inward light, alas!  
 Puts forth no visual beam.—  
 O mirror of our fickle state,

145. *In Ramath-lechi.*] Judges xv. 17.

147. *Azza.*] Gaza: called Azzah in Jer. xxv. 20.

148. *Seat of giants.*] 'The city of Arba, the father of Anak, which city is Hebron.' Josh. xv. 13.

149. *No journey.*] This is a nominative of exclamation. A sabbath-day's journey was little more than a mile. Hebron was about 40 miles east of Gaza.

*And loaded so.*] And he loaded so: where *he* is another nominative of exclamation.

150. *Like whom.*] Loaded like him whom, &c. viz. Atlas, who was supposed to bear heaven on his shoulders.

154. *Inseparably dark.*] That admits of no separation from darkness. Samson being *the* *dungeon of himself*, could not be separated from darkness by being removed out of the prison of Gaza.

157. *Which men, &c.*] Which imprisonment of the soul within the body, men who enjoy sight often complain of without reason.

161. *To incorporate, &c.*] To occupy a body of darkness.

163. *No visual beam.*] No ray of light to occasion vision.

164. *O mirror, &c.*] A person was called the mirror of grace, politeness, knighthood, &c. who was considered the most

Since man on earth unparalleled ! 165

The rarer thy example stands,

By how much from the top of wondrous glory,

Strongest of mortal men,

To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen :

For him I reckon not in high estate, 170

Whom long descent of birth,

Or the sphere of fortune, raises ;

But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mate,

Might have subdued the earth,

Universally crowned with highest praises. 175

*Sams.* I hear the sound of words ; their sense the air

Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

*Chor.* He speaks, let us draw nigh.—Matchless in might,

The glory late of Israel, now the grief !

We come, thy friends and neighbours not unknown, 180

From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale,

To visit or bewail thee ; or, if better,

Counsel or consolation we may bring,

Salve to thy sores ; apt words have power to swage

The tumours of a troubled mind, 185

eminent example or pattern of these characteristics. So Samson is here considered as reflecting the most remarkable image of the mutability of human life.

166. *The rarer . . . by how much.*]

A Latin form of expression—the rarer inasmuch as. The phrase 'by how much' is equivalent to an adverbial conjunction, and is the connective of the clauses between which it stands.

172. *The sphere of fortune.*]

'Fortune,' says Warburton, 'is painted on a globe, which by her influence is in a perpetual rotation on its axis.'

173. *But thee, &c.*] The order

of analysis is, 'But I reckon in high estate thee whose strength, universally crowned with highest praises, might have subdued the earth, while virtue was her mate.'

177. *Ere it reach.*] *Reach* for *does reach*.

181. *Eshtaol and Zora.*] Two towns of the tribe of Dan; the latter of them being the birth-place of Samson.

182. *Or bewail.*] Calton says the poet dictated 'and bewail'

*Or if better, &c.*] Or we come if better we may bring counsel, &c. that is, we come to try whether with better design we may, &c.

And are as balm to festered wounds.

*Sams.* Your coming, friends, revives me ; for I learn  
Now of my own experience, not by talk,  
How counterfeit a coin they are who friends  
Bear in their superscription,—of the most 19  
I would be understood. In prosperous days  
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head, -  
Not to be found though sought. Ye see, O friends,  
How many evils have enclosed me round ;  
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me, 19  
Blindness ; for had I sight, confused with shame,  
How could I once look up, or heave the head ?  
Who, like a foolish pilot have shipwrecked  
My vessel, trusted to me from above,  
Gloriously rigged ; and for a word, a tear, 20  
Fool ! have divulged the secret gift of God  
To a deceitful woman. Tell me, friends,  
Am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool  
In every street ? Do they not say, How well  
Are come upon him his deserts ? Yet why ? 20  
Immeasurable strength they might behold  
In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean ;  
This with the other should at least have paired,  
These two, proportioned ill, drove me transverse.

*Chor.* Tax not divine disposal ; wisest men 21  
Have erred, and by bad women been deceived ;

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189. *Friends.*] The name of 'And now I am their song, ye friends. I am their by-word.' Job xx

190. *Of the most, &c.*] I would be understood to speak thus of the majority of professing friends.

200. *Gloriously rigged.*] Milton's too frequent introduction of technical words, or terms of art, has been censured by Addison.

208. *Am I not sung, &c.*

9.

205. *Yet why ?*] That is, why should it be said that I have well deserved this fate ?

207. *Mean.*] Ordinary ; average.

209. *Transverse.*] Wrong perversely.

And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.  
 Deject not then so overmuch thyself,  
 Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides.  
 Yet, truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder 215  
 Why thou shouldest wed Philistian women rather  
 Than of thine own tribe, fairer or as fair,  
 At least of thine own nation, and as noble.

*Sams.* The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased  
 Me, not my parents that I sought to wed 220  
 The daughter of an infidel. They knew not  
 That what I motioned was of God; I knew  
 From intimate impulse, and therefore urged  
 The marriage on; that by occasion hence  
 I might begin Israel's deliverance, 225  
 The work to which I was divinely called.  
 She proving false, the next I took to wife—  
 O that I never had! fond wish too late!—  
 Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,  
 That specious monster, my accomplished snare. 230

212. *Pretend they, &c.*] However wisely they may intend. In the old writers the words *pretend* and *pretence* were not restricted to the unfavourable meaning which they now have. Thus in Shakspeare *Two Gent. of Ver.* ii. 6, 'pretended flight' means *intended* flight.

217. *Than of thine own, &c.*] Than women, fairer, or as fair, and as noble, of thine own tribe, at least of thine own nation.—'Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people,' &c. Judges xiv. 1-4.

220. *Not my parents, &c.*] That I sought to wed, &c., pleased not

my parents.

222. *I motioned.*] I proposed. So in *Par. Lost*, ix. 229, 'Well hast thou motioned.'

223. *Intimate.*] Inward. Lat. *intimus*, inmost.

227. *Took to wife.*] Except in this phrase, the use of *to* in the sense of *for* is now uncommon. In old writers it often occurs:—'We shall have him well to friend.' Shakspeare *Jul. Cæs.* iii. 1. 'I shall find the time to friend.' *Macbeth*, iv. 3. 'Destiny that hath to instrument this lower world.' *Tempest*, iii. 3. See the Editor's *Macbeth*, p. 81, note 4.

229. *The vale of Sorec.*] On the north of Eshtaoi and Zora.

I thought it lawful from my former act,  
 And the same end ; still watching to oppress  
 Israel's oppressors. Of what now I suffer  
 She was not the prime cause, but I myself,  
 Who, vanquished with a peal of words—O weakness ! 235  
 Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

*Chor.* In seeking just occasion to provoke  
 The Philistine, thy country's enemy,  
 Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness ;  
 Yet Israël still serves with all his sons. 240

*Sams.* That fault I take not on me, but transfer  
 On Israel's governors and heads of tribes ;  
 Who, seeing those great acts which God had done  
 Singly by me against their conquerors,  
 Acknowledged not, or not at all considered, 245  
 Deliverance offered. I, on the other side,  
 Used no ambition to commend my deeds ;  
 The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the doer.  
 But they perished deaf, and would not seem  
 To count them things worth notice ; till at length 250  
 Their lords the Philistines, with gathered powers,  
 Entered Judea seeking me, who then

231. *From my former act, &c.*] From my former act having been sanctioned by Heaven, and the design of this marriage being the same.

235. *A peal of words.*] This anachronistic allusion to modern artillery is a licence in imitation of Shakspeare. 'She pressed him daily with her words,' Judges xvi. 16.

Compare Shakspeare's 1 *K. Henry VI.* iii. 3,—

I am vanquished : those haughty words  
 of hers  
 Have battered me like roaring cannon-  
 shot.

240. *Still serves.*] Is still in bondage.

245. *Acknowledged not, &c.*] The poet here had in mind what St. Stephen says of Moses smiting the Egyptian. Acts vii. 25.

247. *Ambition.*] Going about with appeals or solicitations : the literal meaning of the Latin origin of the word.

251. *Their lords the Philistines.*] 'Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us?' Judges xv. 11.

Safe to the rock of Etham was retired;  
 Not flying, but forecasting in what place  
 To set upon them, what advantaged best. 255  
 Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent  
 The harass of their land, beset me round.  
 I willingly, on some conditions, came  
 Into their hands, and they as gladly yielded me  
 To the uncircumcised a welcome prey, 260  
 Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threads  
 Touched with the flame. On their whole host I flew,  
 Unarmed, and with a trivial weapon felled  
 Their choicest youth: they only lived who fled.  
 Had Judah that day joined, or one whole tribe, 265  
 They had by this possessed the towers of Gath,  
 And lorded over them whom now they serve.  
 But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,  
 And by their vices brought to servitude,  
 Than to love bondage more than liberty!— 270  
 Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;  
 And to despise, or envy, or suspect  
 Whom God hath of his special favour raised  
 As their deliverer; if he aught begin,  
 How frequent to desert him, and at last, 275  
 To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds!

*Chor.* Thy words to my remembrance bring

253. *Etham.*] On the road from Hebron to Jerusalem, where the pools and pleasure-gardens of Solomon were afterwards made. Homer, *Od.* i. 234, ἐτέρας ἐβδ-  
 λοντο θεοί.

254. *Forecasting.*] Considering or calculating beforehand; planning. So in *P. L.* iii. 634, 'But first he casts to change his proper shape;' xii. 43, 'They cast to build a city and tower.' See St. Luke i. 29. Compare 268. *What more oft.*] What happens more frequently. 271. *Bondage with ease, &c.*] With this Newton compares the sentiment of Æmilius Lepidus the consul, in his oration to the Roman people against Sulla, preserved among the fragments of Sallust—'Potior visa est periculosa libertas quieto servitio.'

How Succoth and the fort of Penuël  
 Their great deliverer contemned,  
 The matchless Gideon, in pursuit 280  
 Of Madian and her vanquished kings;  
 And how ingrateful Ephraïm  
 Had dealt with Jephtha—who by argument,  
 Not worse than by his shield and spear,  
 Defended Israel from the Ammonite— 285  
 Had not his prowess quelled their pride  
 In that sore battle, when so many died,  
 Without reprieve adjudged to death,  
 For want of well pronouncing Shibboleth.  
*Sams.* Of such examples add me to the roll. 290  
 Me easily indeed mine may neglect,  
 But God's proposed deliverance not so.  
*Chor.* Just are the ways of God,  
 And justifiable to men;  
 Unless there be who think not God at all. 295  
 If any be, they walk obscure;  
 For of such doctrine never was there school,  
 But the heart of the fool,  
 And no man therein doctor but himself.  
 Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just, 300

278. *Succoth and the fort of Penuël.*] Succoth was a town of the Gadites; Penuël, a town on the river Jabbok. They refused to supply food to Gideon's men when pursuing the Midianites. Judges viii.

283. *Had dealt.*] Would have dealt. See Judges xii.

*By argument.*] This refers to the message sent by Jephtha to the king of the Ammonites; Judges, xi. 14.

291. *Me easily, &c.*] My peo-

ple may indeed easily be allowed to treat me with neglect, but not so to treat, &c.

295. *Who think not God at all.*] Who think not that any God exists; who are atheists.

298. *The heart of the fool.* 'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.' Psalm xiv. 1.

299. *Doctor.*] Teacher. Thyra says 'There is something rather too quaint and fanciful in this conceit.'

As to his own edicts found contradicting ;  
 Then give the reins to wandering thought,  
 Regardless of his glory's diminution,  
 Till, by their own perplexities involved,  
 They ravel more, still less resolved, 305  
 But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine the Interminable !  
 And tie him to his own prescript,  
 Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,  
 And hath full right to exempt 310  
 Whom so it pleases him by choice  
 From national obstriction, without taint  
 Of sin or legal debt ;  
 For with his own laws he can best dispense.

He would not else, who never wanted means, 315  
 Nor in respect of the enemy just cause,  
 To set his people free,  
 Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,  
 Against his vow of strictest purity,  
 To seek in marriage that fallacious bride, 320  
 Unclean, unchaste.

Down, reason, then ; at least vain reasonings, down ;  
 Though reason here aver  
 That moral verdict quits her of unclean :

301. *Who doubt, &c.*] Who suspect his ways to be unjust as being found contradictory to his own positive institutions. *Edicts* does not here signify or include moral laws, which are of eternal obligation.

303. *Of his glory's diminution.*] Of the guilt of derogating from his glory.

305. *Still less resolved.*] Always less certain or assured.

310. *To exempt, &c.*] The order is, 'To exempt from na-

tional obstriction, without taint of sin or legal debt, whom it so pleases him by choice.' *Obstriction* means *obligation* ; and here has reference to the law which prohibited the Israelites from marrying with Gentiles.

324. *That moral verdict, &c.* That according to moral or natural law, though not according to ceremonial law, Samson's wife was clean : the circumstance of her being unchaste occurred after the marriage.



Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.

But see! here comes thy reverend sire  
With careful step, locks white as down,  
Old Manoa. Advise

Forthwith how thou oughtest to receive him.

*Sams.* Ay me! another inward grief, awaked  
With mention of that name, renews the assault.

*Man.* Brethren and men of Dan—for such ye seem,  
Though in this uncouth place—if old respect,  
As I suppose, toward your once-gloried friend,  
My son, now captive, hither hath informed  
Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age  
Came lagging after, say if he be here.

*Chor.* As signal now in low dejected state,  
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

*Man.* O miserable change! Is this the man?

That invincible Samson, far renowned,  
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength  
Equivalent to Angel's walked their streets,  
None offering fight; who single combatant  
Duelled their armies ranked in proud array,  
Himself an army, now unequal match  
To save himself against a coward armed  
At one spear's length. O ever-failing trust  
In mortal strength! and Oh, what not in man  
Deceivable and vain! Nay, what thing good

327. *Careful.*] Anxious.

328. *Advise.*] Consider.

330. *Ay me!*] The old expression for *ah me!*

333. *Uncouth.*] Rude. The word originally means *unknown* or *strange*.

334. *Gloried.*] Honourably distinguished.

335. *Informed.*] Actuated; moved.

Not all parts like, but all alike informed  
With radiant light.—*Par. Lost*, III. 583.  
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal  
part. Pope's *Essay on Man*.

339. *Erst.*] At first. The superlative of *ere*.

349. *What not in man.*] What in man is not. The expression *in man* is adverbial to *what*.

Prayed for, but often proves our woe, our bane !  
 I prayed for children, and thought barrenness  
 In wedlock a reproach ; I gained a son,  
 And such a son as all men hailed me happy.  
 Who would be now a father in my stead ? 355  
 Oh, wherefore did God grant me my request,  
 And as a blessing with such pomp adorned ?  
 Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt  
 Our earnest prayers, then, given with solemn hand  
 As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind ? 360  
 For this did the Angel twice descend ? for this  
 Ordained thy nurture holy ? as of a plant  
 Select and sacred, glorious for a while,  
 The miracle of men ; then in an hour  
 Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound, 365  
 Thy foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind,  
 Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves.  
 Alas ! methinks whom God hath chosen once

353. *A reproach.*] Indirect object to *thought*.

354. *As all men.*] That all men. This use of *as* is frequent in old authors. So Bacon, *Essays*, VI. 'If a man have that penetration or judgment as he can discern what things are to be laid open,' &c.

357. *With such pomp adorned.*] Made so much of in the manner in which it was bestowed.

358. *Desirable.*] Made to appear desirable.

359. *Given with solemn hand, &c.*] Conferred in a solemn manner as favours, or benefits.

360. *Draw, &c.*] Why draw they a scorpion's tail behind ? Why do they occasion misery in the end ? Milton, no doubt, had in mind the words, 'If he shall

ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion ? Luke xi. 12 ; see Rev. ix. 10.

362. *Ordained, &c.*] Enjoined he that thy rearing should be that of a Nazarite ?

363. *Glorious, &c.*] The words 'glorious,' 'miracle,' 'ensnared,' &c. are descriptive of the state of things referred to in the previous expression 'for this,' and may be supposed as having to be understood before them.

368. *Methinks.*] It seems to me. The derivation is from the Saxon *thencan*, to seem, not from *thincan*, to think.

*Whom God hath chosen.*] *Whom* is governed by *chosen*, and the clause introduced by *whom* is an objective noun clause to *overwhelm*.

To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,  
 He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall 370  
 Subject him to so foul indignities !  
 Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.  
*Sams.* Appoint not heavenly disposition, father !  
 Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me  
 But justly ; I myself have brought them on, 375  
 Sole author I, sole cause. If aught seem vile,  
 As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned  
 The mystery of God, given me under pledge  
 Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,  
 A Canaanite, my faithless enemy. 380  
 This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,  
 But warned by oft experience. Did not she  
 Of Timna first betray me ? and reveal  
 The secret wrested from me in her highth  
 Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight 385  
 To them who had corrupted her, my spies  
 And rivals ? In this other was there found  
 More faith ? who also in her prime of love,  
 Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,  
 Though offered only, by the sent conceived 390

372. *Of former deeds.*] In relation to former deeds.

373. *Appoint not, &c.*] Do not limit or restrict the manner in which Heaven should dispose matters.

375. *But justly.*] This is to be accounted a clause = But it hath befallen me justly.

377. *As vile.*] Equally base.

382. *Oft.*] *Oft* and *often* were formerly adjectives as well as adverbs. Thus in 1 Timothy, v. 23, 'Thine often infirmities,' Shaksp. *As you Like it*, iv. 1, 'My often rumination.'

387. *Rivals.*] Those whom Samson had challenged with his riddle. Judges xiv. 12, 13.

389. *Vitiated with gold, &c.*] Corrupted by the mere offer or sight of money. Judges xvi. 18.

390. *By the sent conceived, &c.*] Milton here figuratively describes Dalila as having through the mere *scout*, that is, *sense* or perception of the offered money, conceived treason. *Scout*, anciently *sent*, is from the Lat. *sentio*. Spenser in his *Fairy Queen*, I. i. 43, speaks of 'A fit

Her spurious first-born, Treason against me.  
 Thrice she assayed, with flattering prayers, and sighs,  
 And amorous reproaches, to win from me  
 My capital secret, in what part my strength 394  
 Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might know;  
 Thrice I deluded her, and turned to sport  
 Her importunity, each time perceiving  
 How openly, and with what impudence,  
 She purposed to betray me, and—which was worse  
 Than undissembled hate—with what contempt 400  
 She sought to make me traitor to myself.  
 Yet the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,  
 With 'blandished parleys, feminine assaults,  
 Tongue batteries, she surceased not day nor night  
 To storm me over-watched, and wearied out, 405  
 At times when men seek most repose and rest,

false dreame that can delude the sleeper's *sensit.* Howell, in his *Instructions for Forraine Travell*, sect. 1., speaking of the sense of sight, says that by its 'penetrative apprehension of the object with the intuitive virtue and force of affection, it worketh inwardly, as we find upon good record, that a herd of sheep conceived once by the strength of the eye.' Milton probably intended some reference to Danaë, concerning whom one story relates that Jupiter found entrance to her chamber in the form of a shower of gold; another, that he bribed her keepers with gold.

394. *My capital secret.*] *Capital* here signifies *pertaining to the head*. So in *Par. Lost*, xii. 383, 'Needs must the serpent now his capital bruise expect with pain.' Dunster suspects that the ex-

pression 'capital secret' is an intended pun, and 'if so,' he says, 'it is a most indefensible expression.' Addison in his *Spectator*, No. 297, remarks; 'Several of Milton's sentiments are too much pointed; and some degenerate even into puns: of this last kind, I am afraid, is that in the First Book, where, speaking of the Pygmies, he calls them *that small infantry*.'

*In what part, &c.*] The order is, 'That she might know in what part,' &c. *Summed* means *concentrated*.

404. *Tongue-batteries.*] So in l. 235, Samson describes himself as 'vanquished with a peal of words.' See the note on that line.

405. *Over-watched.*] Kept awake too long.

I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart,  
 Who, with a grain of manhood well resolved,  
 Might easily have shook off all her snares ;  
 But foul effeminacy held me yoked 410  
 Her bond-slave. O indignity ! O blot  
 To honour and religion ! servile mind  
 Rewarded well with servile punishment !  
 The base degree to which I now am fallen,  
 These rags, this grinding is not yet so base 415  
 As was my former servitude, ignoble,  
 Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,  
 True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,  
 That saw not how degenerately I served.

*Man.* I cannot praise thy marriage-choices, son, 420  
 Rather approved them not ; but thou didst plead  
 Divine impulsion, prompting how thou mightest  
 Find some occasion to infest our foes.

I state not that ; this I am sure, our foes  
 Found soon occasion thereby to make thee 425  
 Their captive, and their triumph ; thou the sooner  
 Temptation foundest, or over-potent charms,  
 To violate the sacred trust of silence

Deposited within thee ; which to have kept  
 Tacit was in thy power : true ; and thou bearest 430  
 Enough, and more, the burden of that fault.  
 Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying,  
 That rigid score ; a worse thing yet remains.—

This day the Philistines a popular feast  
 Here celebrate in Gaza ; and proclaim 435  
 Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud,

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408. *Manhood well resolved.*] not that a question. To state =  
 Well resolved or resolute man- to propose for logical disputation.  
 hood.

418. *Worse.*] Was worse.

424 *I state not that.*] I make

433. *That rigid score.*] That  
 rigorous liability.

To Dagon, as their god who hath delivered  
 Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands,  
 Them out of thine, who slewest them many a slain.  
 So Dagon shall be magnified, and God, 440  
 Besides whom is no god, compared with idols,  
 Disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn,  
 By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;  
 Which to have come to pass by means of thee,  
 Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest, 445  
 Of all reproach the most with shame that ever  
 Could have befallen thee and thy father's house.

*Sams.* Father, I do acknowledge and confess  
 That I this honour, I this pomp have brought  
 To Dagon, and advanced his praises high 450  
 Among the Heathen round; to God have brought  
 Dishonour, obloquy, and oped the mouths  
 Of idolists and atheists; have brought scandal  
 To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt  
 In feeble hearts, propense enough before 455  
 To waver, or fall off and join with idols;  
 Which is my chief affliction, shame, and sorrow,  
 The anguish of my soul, that suffers not  
 Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.  
 This only hope relieves me, that the strife 460  
 With me hath end; all the contest is now  
 'Twixt God and Dagon. Dagon hath presumed,

437. *Who hath delivered, &c.*] See Judges xvi. 23.

439. *Them out of thine.*] And delivered them out of thy hands.

*Who slew'st them, &c.*] Who wast for them the slayer of many a slain one. *Them* is the indirect object of *slew'st*.

444. *Which to have come to pass.*] *Which* is objective to

*think*; and *to have come* is an adjectival infinitive to *which*.

446. *Reproach.*] Reproach thou.

455. *Propense.*] Forwardly inclined; having propensity.

460. *The strife with me hath end.*] The contest no longer depends on my conduct.

Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,  
 His deity comparing and preferring  
 Before the God of Abraham : He, be sure, 465  
 Will not connive or linger, thus provoked,  
 But will arise, and his great name assert.  
 Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive  
 Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him  
 Of all these boasted trophies won on me, 470  
 And with confusion blank his worshippers.

*Man.* With cause this hope relieves thee, and these words  
 I as a prophecy receive ; for God—  
 Nothing more certain—will not long defer  
 To vindicate the glory of his name 475  
 Against all competition, nor will long  
 Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord,  
 Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done ?  
 Thou must not in the meanwhile, here forgot,  
 Lie in this miserable loathsome plight, 480  
 Neglected. I already have made way  
 To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat  
 About thy ransom : well they may by this  
 Have satisfied their utmost of revenge,  
 By pains and slaveries, worse than death, inflicted 485  
 On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

*Sams.* Spare that proposal, father ; spare the trouble  
 Of that solicitation. Let me here,

463. *Me overthrown.*] I being overthrown ; now that I am overthrown, Milton here imitates the ablative absolute, of Latin syntax.

*To enter lists.*] *Lists* were the fences enclosing a tilting ground. We must accept the expression as denoting *to come into contest*.

467. *Assert.*] Vindicate.

471. *Blank.*] Make pale ; dis-  
 ray ; cause to look blank. So  
 in Shakspeare's *Hamlet*, iii. 2,  
 'Each opposite that blanks the  
 face of joy.'

474. *Nothing more certain.*] There is nothing more certain : a parenthetical clause.

481. *Made way.*] Obtained access.

483. *By this.*] By this time.

As I deserve, pay on my punishment;  
 And expiate, if possible, my crime, 490  
 Shameful garrulity. To have revealed  
 Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,  
 How heinous had the fact been, how deserving  
 Contempt and scorn of all, to be excluded  
 All friendship, and avoided as a blab,— 495  
 The mark of fool set on his front! But I  
 God's counsel have not kept, his holy secret  
 Presumptuously have published, impiously,  
 Weakly at least and shamefully,—a sin  
 That Gentiles in their parables condemn 500  
 To their Abyss and horrid pains confined.

*Man.* Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite,  
 But act not in thine own affliction, son.  
 Repent the sin, but if the punishment  
 Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids; 505  
 Or the execution leave to high disposal,  
 And let another hand, not thine, exact  
 Thy penal forfeit from thyself. Perhaps  
 God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;  
 Who ever more approves and more accepts— 510  
 Best pleased with humble and filial submission—  
 Him who, imploring mercy, sues for life,  
 Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due;

492. *Secrets of men.*] This anticipates, in the way of contrast, the expression 'God's counsel,' in line 497.

493. *The fact.*] The act. We often meet with the word *fact* in this sense in our old authors.

*Deserving.*] Here we must supply *for him*.

496. *Set.*] Being set.

500. *In their parables, &c.*] The heathen parable or fable

here alluded to is that of Tantalus, whose 'shameful garrulity' in revealing the secrets of the gods was punished in the manner so well known.

Garrulus in mediâ Tantalus aret aquâ.  
 Ovid, *Art. Amas.* ll. 606.

501. *To their abyss, &c.*] To be confined to their abyss, &c. The participle *confined* grammatically relates to the noun *sin*.

503. *In thy own affliction.*] In punishing thyself.



Which argues over-just, and self-displeased  
 For self-offence, more than for God offended. 515  
 Reject not then what offered means who knows  
 But God hath set before us to return thee  
 Home to thy country and his sacred house?  
 Where thou mayest bring thy offerings, to avert  
 His further ire, with prayers and vows renewed. 520  
*Sams.* His pardon I implore; but as for life,  
 To what end should I seek it?—when in strength  
 All mortals I excelled, and great in hopes,  
 With youthful courage, and magnanimous thoughts  
 Of birth from Heaven foretold, and high exploits, 525  
 Full of divine instinct, after some proof  
 Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond  
 The sons of Anak, famous now and blazed,  
 Fearless of danger, like a petty god  
 I walked about, admired of all and dreaded 530  
 On hostile ground, none daring my affront:—  
 Then, swollen with pride, into the snare I fell  
 Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,

514. *Which argues over-just, &c.*] Which argues a man to be 'righteous overmuch' in his own esteem, as making a merit of choosing to be punished.

516. *What offered means.*] This expression is objective to 'hath set;' the object of the verb 'reject' is the complex noun sentence, 'What offered means (who knows but) God hath set before us,' that is, appointed or designed for us.

521. *As for life.*] This expression may be parsed by supplying the verb *matters* after the adverbial conjunction *as*.

523. *And great.*] And was great.

525. *Of birth, &c.*] Of birth and high exploits foretold from Heaven.

526. *Full.*] And full.

529. *Fearless.*] And fearless.

530. *Admired of all.*] Wondered at by all.

531. *My affront.*] My encounter; my confronting attitude. So in Shaksp. *Hamlet*, iii. 1, 'That he, as 'twere by accident, may here affront Ophelia;' and in *A Winter's Tale*, v. 1, 'Unless another, as like Hermione as is her picture, affront his eye.'

533. *Venereal trains.*] Artifices of Venus. A *train* is a snare.

Softened with pleasure and voluptuous life;  
 At length to lay my head and hallowed pledge 535  
 Of all my strength in the lascivious lap  
 Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me,  
 Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,  
 Then turned me out ridiculous, despoiled,  
 Shaven, and disarmed among mine enemies. 540

*Chor.* Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,  
 Which many a famous warrior overturns,  
 Thou couldest repress; nor did the dancing ruby,  
 Sparkling, out-poured, the flavour, or the smell,  
 Or taste, that cheers the hearts of gods and men, 545  
 Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

*Sams.* Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed  
 Against the eastern ray translucent, pure  
 With touch ethereal of Heaven's fiery rod,  
 I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying 550  
 Thirst, and refreshed; nor envied them the grape  
 Whose head that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

*Chor.* O madness! to think use of strongest wines  
 And strongest drinks our chief support of health;

543. *The dancing ruby, &c.*] The red sparkling drops dancing in the cup when the wine is poured out.

545. *That cheers, &c.*] An allusion to Judges ix. 13, where Jotham, in speaking of 'wine which cheereth god and man,' intended a reference to Baal-berith, the idol god of Shechem.

548. *Against the eastern ray translucent, &c.*] Translucent against the stroke, as it were, of the first ray of the morning sun, which made the water glisten and attract Samson's eye, and which the poet calls 'Heaven's

fiery rod,' in allusion to the rod of Moses which made water start into view out of the dark bosom of the rock. In *Comus*, 340, we have the expression 'Long-levelled rule of streaming light.' Perhaps in the *Suppliants* of Milton's favourite Euripides, l. 650, we have the origin of our poet's conception:—

Λαμπρά μὲν ἀντίς ἡλίου, καθὼν σαφές,  
 Ἐβάλλε γαίαν:

that is, the bright ray of the sun, clear rule, impinged upon the earth.

550. *Milky juice.*] As it were the milk of the earth's bosom.

When God with these forbidden made choice to rear 555  
 His mighty champion, strong above compare,  
 Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

*Sams.* But what availed this temperance, not complete  
 Against another object more enticing?  
 What boots it at one gate to make defence, 560  
 And at another to let in the foe,  
 Effeminately vanquished? by which means,  
 Now blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonoured, quelled,  
 To what can I be useful? wherein serve  
 My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed? 565  
 But to sit idle on the household hearth,  
 A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze,  
 Or pitied object; these redundant locks,  
 Robustious to no purpose, clustering down,  
 Vain monument of strength; till length of years 570  
 And sedentary numbness craze my limbs,  
 To a contemptible old age obscure.  
 Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread;  
 Till vermin, or the draff of servile food,  
 Consume me, and oft-invoked death 575  
 Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.

*Man.* Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift  
 Which was expressly given thee to annoy them?  
 Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,  
 Inglorious, unemployed, with age outworn. 580

558. *Temperance.*] Self-restraint or control.

566. *But to sit.*] Destined only to sit.

568. *These redundant locks, &c.*] These superfluously flowing locks, vainly forcible, &c. The old word *robustious* usually meant *violent*. So in *Hamlet*, iii, 2, 'To see a robustious peri-

wig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters;' and in Drayton's *Barons' Wars*, v. 85, 'Cast from my seat in some robustious course.'

571. *Craze.*] Disable; break the vigour of. Fr. *écraiser*, to bruise or break.

574. *The draff.*] The refuse.

But God who caused a fountain at thy prayer  
 From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay  
 After the brunt of battle, can as easy  
 Cause light again within thy eyes to spring.  
 Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast. 585  
 And I persuade me so; why else this strength  
 Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?  
 His might continues in thee not for nought,  
 Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

*Sams.* All otherwise to me my thoughts portend: 590  
 That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,  
 Nor the other light of life continue long,  
 But yield to double darkness nigh at hand;  
 So much I feel my genial spirits droop,  
 My hopes all flat; Nature within me seems 595  
 In all her functions weary of herself;  
 My race of glory run, and race of shame,  
 And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

*Man.* Believe not these suggestions, which proceed  
 From anguish of the mind, and humours black 600  
 That mingle with thy fancy. I, however,  
 Must not omit a father's timely care  
 To prosecute the means of thy deliverance,  
 By ransom or how else. Meanwhile be calm,

582. *From the dry ground.*] Milton here follows an approved commentary on Judges xv. 19, which regards the fountain as opened in some part of Lehi, the place, not in Lehi, the jaw-bone, from which the place got its name.

582. *Frustrate.*] See note on l. 31.

600. *Humours black.*] *Melancholy*, which literally signifies *black bile*, was one of the four humours anciently supposed to constitute human temperament;

the others being *phlegm*, *blood*, and *choler*. Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, quotes an opinion of Galen that the mind sometimes by reason of 'dark, obscure, gross fumes ascending from black humours, is in continual darkness, fear, and sorrow; divers terrible monstrous fictions in a thousand shapes and apparitions occur, with violent passions, by which the brain and phantasy are troubled and eclipsed.'

And healing words from these thy friends admit. 605

*Sams.* Oh ! that torment should not be confined  
To the body's wounds and sores,  
With maladies innumerable,  
In heart, head, breast, and reins ;  
But must secret passage find 610  
To the inmost mind,  
There exercise all his fierce accidents,  
And on her purest spirits prey,  
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,  
With answerable pains, but more intense, 615  
Though void of corporal sense.

My griefs not only pain me  
As a lingering disease,  
But, finding no redress, ferment and rage ;  
Nor less than wounds inmedicable 620  
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,  
To black mortification.  
Thoughts, my tormentors, armed with deadly stings,  
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,  
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise 625  
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb  
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,  
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.  
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er  
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure ; 630

612. *Accidents.*] Accidental Romeo says, 'How hast thou the means or modes of affliction. heart to mangle me with that

615. *Answerable pains.*] Corresponding pains. word—banished ?'

620. *Nor less, &c.*] Nor do *Apprehensive.*] Susceptible ;

they less rankle, &c., than im- sensitive.  
medicable wounds. 'Immedica- 623. *Alp.*] Milton, like the  
bile vulnus' is an expression in Italian poets, uses this word for  
Ovid, *Met.* x. 189. mountain, as in *Par. Lost*, ii.

624. *Mangle.*] Torture. In 620, 'O'er many a frozen, many  
Shaksp. *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 3, a fiery Alp.'

Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,  
And sense of Heaven's desertion.

I was his nursling once, and choice delight,  
His destined from the womb,  
Promised by heavenly message twice descending. 635  
Under his special eye

Abstemious I grew up, and thrived amain.  
He led me on to mightiest deeds,  
Above the nerve of mortal arm,  
Against the uncircumcised, our enemies; 640

But now hath cast me off, as never known,  
And to those cruel enemies,  
Whom I by his appointment had provoked,  
Left me all helpless, with the irreparable loss  
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated 645  
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.

Nor am I in the list of them that hope;  
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless.  
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,  
No long petition, speedy death, 650  
The close of all my miseries, and the balm.

*Chor.* Many are the sayings of the wise,  
In ancient and in modern books inrolled,  
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude;  
And, to the bearing well of all calamities, 655  
All chances incident to man's frail life,  
Consolatories writ

633. *His.*] Heaven's.

637. *Amain.*] Mightily.

638. *To be repeated.*] To be repeatedly made.

650. *Speedy death.*] This is a nominative in apposition to 'prayer.'

653. *Inrolled.*] The manuscript books of antiquity were in

rolls. 'A roll of a book.' Jerem. xxxvi. 2.

654. *Fortitude.*] Courage. So in *Par. Lost*, ix. 31, 'The better fortitude of patience.'

657. *Consolatories writ, &c.*] And many are the consolatories writ with studied argument, &c. to the bearing well, &c.

With studied argument and much persuasion, sought  
 Lenient of grief and anxious thought.  
 But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound 660  
 Little prevails, or rather seems a tune  
 Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint;  
 Unless he feel within  
 Some source of consolation from above,  
 Secret refreshings, that repair his strength, 665  
 And fainting spirits uphold.  
 God of our fathers, what is man!  
 That thou toward him with hand so various—  
 Or might I say contrarious?—  
 Temperest thy providence through his short course; 670  
 Not evenly, as thou rulest  
 The angelic orders and inferior creatures mute,  
 Irrational and brute.  
 Nor do I name of men the common rout,  
 That, wandering loose about, 675  
 Grow up and perish as the summer-fly,  
 Heads without name, no more remembered;  
 But such as thou hast solemnly elected,  
 With gifts and graces eminently adorned,  
 To some great work, thy glory 680  
 And people's safety, which in part they effect.  
 Yet toward these thus dignified thou oft,  
 Amidst their highth of noon,

658. *Much persuasion sought,*  
*&c.*] With much persuasion  
 that was sought, or intended, to  
 be lenient, &c. I apprehend,  
 that the expression 'sought  
 lenient of,' which has somewhat  
 perplexed Milton's commentators,  
 means the same as *that sought to*  
*be lenient of,* or *to alleviate.*  
 Horace, Ep. I. i. 34, has the

phrase 'lenire dolorem.'

668. *With hand so various.*  
 With administration so diversi-  
 fied. In what follows, to l. 704,  
 Milton reflected on the fortunes  
 of his party after the Restora-  
 tion.

670. *Temperest.*] Regulatest;  
 orderest.

671. *Evenly.*] Uniformly.

Changest thy countenance and thy hand, with no regard  
Of highest favours past 685  
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit  
To life obscured, which were a fair dismission,  
But throwest them lower than thou didst exalt them high :  
Unseemly falls in human eye, 690  
Too grievous for the trespass of omission ;  
Oft leavest them to the hostile sword  
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses  
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captived,  
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times, 695  
And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.  
If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty  
With sickness and disease thou bowest them down,  
Painful diseases and deformed,  
In crude old age ; 700  
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering  
The punishment of dissolute days. In fine,  
Just or unjust alike seem miserable,  
For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion, 705  
The image of thy strength and mighty minister.  
What do I beg ? how hast thou dealt already !  
Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn

686. *Or them, &c.*] Or of service from them to thee.

687. *Remit.*] Dismiss.

691. *The trespass of omission.*] Their coming short of the complete accomplishment of God's purpose; they having been elected, as the poet has just said, 'to some great work—which in part they effect.' l. 680.

700. *Crude.*] Premature.

701. *Though not disordinate.*]

Though not intemperate, yet suffering without cause the punishment due to an intemperate life. Milton, says Newton, 'escaped with life, but lived in poverty; and though he was always very sober and temperate, yet he was much afflicted with the gout and other *painful diseases in crude old age* (*cruda senectus*), when he was not yet a very old man.'



His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

But who is this? what thing of sea or land— 710

Female of sex it seems—

That so bedecked, ornate, and gay,

Comes this way sailing,—

Like a stately ship

Of Tarsus bound for the isles 715

Of Javan or Gadire,

With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,

Sails filled, and streamers waving,

Courted by all the winds that hold them play,—

An amber sent of odorous perfume 720

Her harbinger, a damsel train behind?

Some rich Philistian matron she may seem;—

And now at nearer view, no other certain

Than Dalila thy wife.

*Sams.* My wife! my traitress; let her not come near me. 725

*Chor.* Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee fixed,

About to have spoke; but now, with head declined,

Like a fair flower surcharged with dew, she weeps,

And words addressed seem into tears dissolved,

Wetting the borders of her silken veil. 730

But now again she makes address to speak.

714. *Like a stately ship, &c.*] The ships of Tarshish, here called of Tarsus, are often mentioned in Scripture. But Tarshish, probably, was not the same as Tarsus in Cilicia.

716. *Javan or Gadire.*] Javan, or Ion, the fourth son of Japhet, is said to have peopled Greece. Gadire, *Gadelpa*, is Gades or Cadiz.

717. *Bravery.*] Gallant ornament. The word often meant *finery* in our old literature.

719. *Hold them play.*] Keep them in play. So in Shakspeare.

*Henry VIII.* v. 3, 'A marshalsea shall hold you play these two months.'

720. *An amber scent.*] Ambergris was formerly a favourite perfume with ladies. In Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale*, iv. 3, Autolycus has among his wares 'Necklace amber, perfume for a lady's chamber.'

723. *No other, certain.*] Certainly no other.

729. *Addressed.*] That had been prepared. So in the next line but one, *address* means *preparation*.

*Dal.* With doubtful feet and wavering resolution  
 I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,  
 Which to have merited, without excuse  
 I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears 735  
 May expiate—though the fact more evil drew  
 In the perverse event than I foresaw,—  
 My penance hath not slackened, though my pardon  
 No way assured. But conjugal affection,  
 Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt, 740  
 Hath led me on, desirous to behold  
 Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,  
 If aught in my ability may serve  
 To lighten what thou sufferest, and appease  
 Thy mind with what amends is in my power, 745  
 Though late, yet in some part to recompense  
 My rash, but more unfortunate, misdeed.

*Sams.* Out, out, hyæna! these are thy wonted arts,  
 And arts of every woman false like thee,  
 To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray, 750  
 Then, as repentant, to submit, beseech,  
 And reconciliation move with feigned remorse,  
 Confess, and promise wonders in her change,—  
 Not truly penitent, but chief to try  
 Her husband, how far urged his patience bears, 755  
 His virtue or weakness which way to assail.  
 Then, with more cautious and instructed skill,  
 Again transgresses, and again submits;

736. *The fact.*] The act. *See*  
 note on l. 93.

738. *Though my pardon, &c.*] Though it has in no way assured me of forgiveness. Dalila means that she made no merit of her penance.

744. *To appease.*] That is, desirous to appease.

746. *To recompense.*] To compensate.

747. *More unfortunate.*] More unfortunate in its consequences than rash on my part.

748. *Hyæna.*] The hyæna was fabled to imitate a human voice to attract people to it, and devour them.

755. *How far urged.*] The circumstance expressed in these words is object to the transitive verb *bears*.

That wisest and best men, full oft beguiled,  
 With goodness principled not to reject 760  
 The penitent, but ever to forgive,  
 Are drawn to wear out miserable days,  
 Entangled with a poisonous bosom snake;  
 If not by quick destruction soon cut off,  
 As I by thee, to ages an example. 765

*Dal.* Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavour  
 To lessen or extenuate my offence,  
 But that, on the other side, if it be weighed  
 By itself, with aggravations not surcharged,  
 Or else with just allowance counterpoised, 770  
 I may, if possible, thy pardon find  
 The easier toward me, or thy hatred less:—  
 First granting, as I do, it was a weakness  
 In me, but incident to all our sex,  
 Curiosity, inquisitive, importune 775  
 Of secrets, then with like infirmity  
 To publish them—both common female faults:—  
 Was it not weakness also to make known,  
 For importunity, that is, for nought,  
 Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety? 780  
 To what I did thou shewedst me first the way.  
 But I to enemies revealed, and should not;—  
 Nor shouldest thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:  
 Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.  
 Let weakness then with weakness come to parle, 785

760. *Principled.*] Instructed, schooled. So in *Comus*, 367, 'Unprincipled in virtue's book.'

766. *Not that.*] Not meaning to say that.

775. *Curiosity, &c.*] Namely curiosity, inquisitive and importunate about secrets.

777. *To publish them, &c.*] The construction here is harsh. The

most convenient way, perhaps, for analysis is to supply the pronoun *this*, as a nominative absolute: 'this, and then to publish, &c., being both common female faults.'

782. *But.*] But, you will say.

783. *Nor.*] Neither then.

785. *To parle.*] To treaty.

So near related, or the same of kind;  
 Thine forgive mine, that men may censure thine  
 The gentler, if severely thou exact not  
 More strength from me than in thyself was found.  
 And what if love, which thou interpretest hate, 790  
 The jealousy of love, powerful of sway  
 In human hearts, nor less in mine toward thee,  
 Caused what I did! I saw thee mutable  
 Of fancy, feared lest one day thou wouldst leave me  
 As her at Timna; sought by all means therefore 795  
 How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest.  
 No better way I saw than by importuning  
 To learn thy secrets, get into my power  
 Thy key of strength and safety. Thou wilt say,  
 Why then revealed?—I was assured by those 800  
 Who tempted me, that nothing was designed  
 Against thee but safe custody and hold.  
 That made for me: I knew that liberty  
 Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,  
 While I at home sat full of cares and fears, 805  
 Wailing thy absence in my widowed bed;  
 Here I should still enjoy thee, day and night,  
 Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',  
 Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,  
 Fearless at home of partners in my love. 810  
 These reasons in love's law have passed for good,  
 Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps;  
 And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,  
 Yet always pity or pardon hath obtained.  
 Be not unlike all others, not austere 815

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787. *Thine.*] Let thine.

790. *What.*] What follows.

796. *To endear.*] To endear  
myself.

803. *Made for me.*] Was for

my advantage.

812. *Fond.*] Foolish.

As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.  
 If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,  
 In uncompassionate anger do not so.

*Sams.* How cunningly the sorceress displays  
 Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine!— 820

That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,  
 By this appears. I gave, thou sayest, the example,  
 I led the way; bitter reproach, but true;  
 I to myself was false ere thou to me.

Such pardon therefore as I give my folly, 825

Take to thy wicked deed; which when thou seest  
 Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,

Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather  
 Confess it feigned. Weakness is thy excuse,  
 And I believe it,—weakness to resist 830

Philistian gold. If weakness may excuse,

What murderer, what traitor, parricide,  
 Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?

All wickedness is weakness; that plea therefore  
 With God or man will gain thee no remission. 835

But love constrained thee;—call it furious rage  
 To satisfy thy lust; love seeks to have love.

My love how couldest thou hope? who tookest the way  
 To raise in me inexpiable hate,

Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betrayed. 840

In vain thou strivest to cover shame with shame,

Or by evasions thy crime uncoverest more.

*Dal.* Since thou determinest weakness for no plea

In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,  
 Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides, 845

What sieges girt me round, ere I consented;

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826. *Which.*] Whom; rela- the being betrayed by thee.  
 tive to *I*.

843. *Determinest weakness for,*

840. *Knowing, &c.*] Me know- &c.] Judgest weakness as no  
 ing, as was sure to be the case, plea.

Which might have awed the best-resolved of men,  
 The constantest, to have yielded without blame.  
 It was not gold, as to my charge thou layest,  
 That wrought with me. Thou knowest the magistrates  
 And princes of my country came in person, 851  
 Solicited, commanded, threatened, urged,  
 Adjured by all the bonds of civil duty  
 And of religion; pressed how just it was,  
 How honourable, how glorious, to entrap 855  
 A common enemy, who had destroyed  
 Such numbers of our nation; and the priest  
 Was not behind, but ever at my ear,  
 Preaching how meritorious with the gods  
 It would be to ensnare an irreligious 860  
 Dishonourer of Dagon. What had I  
 To oppose against such powerful arguments?  
 Only my love of thee held long debate,  
 And combated in silence all these reasons  
 With hard contest. At length that grounded maxim, 865  
 So rife and celebrated in the mouths  
 Of wisest men, that to the public good  
 Private respects must yield, with grave authority  
 Took full possession of me and prevailed,  
 Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so enjoining. 870  
*Sams.* I thought where all thy circling wiles would end:  
 In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy!  
 But had thy love, still odiously pretended,  
 Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee  
 Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds. 875  
 I, before all the daughters of my tribe

851. *Came in person, &c.* *hind.*] This is not in the scripture account.

'The lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said,' &c. Judges xvi. 5.

857. *The priest was not be-*

873. *Still odiously pretended.*] Always pretended along with the behaviour of hatred.

And of my nation, chose thee from among  
 My enemies, loved thee—as too well thou knewest—  
 Too well; unbosomed all my secrets to thee,  
 Not out of levity, but overpowered 880  
 By thy request, who could deny thee nothing;  
 Yet now am judged an enemy. Why then  
 Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband,  
 Then, as since then, thy country's foe professed?  
 Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave 885  
 Parents and country; nor was I their subject,  
 Nor under their protection but my own,  
 Thou mine, not theirs. If aught against my life  
 Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,  
 Against the law of nature, law of nations; 890  
 No more thy country, but an impious crew  
 Of men conspiring to uphold their state  
 By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends  
 For which our country is a name so dear;  
 Not therefore to be obeyed. But zeal moved thee:— 895  
 To please thy gods thou didst it.—Gods unable  
 To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes  
 But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction  
 Of their own deity, gods cannot be;  
 Less therefore to be pleased, obeyed, or feared. 900  
 These false pretexts and varnished colours failing,

877. *From among my enemies.*] 'Among my enemies' is an adverbial expression governed by the preceding preposition, as in the phrases *from thence*, *since then*. So, in l. 880, 'out of levity' is an instance of an adverbial preposition phrase modified by an adverb.

878. *Loved thee, &c.*] Loved thee too well, as too well thou knewest.

884. *Since then.*] See the note

on l. 877.

895. *But zeal moved thee, &c.*] With this manner of referring to Dalila's apology compare l. 836, 'But love constrained thee;' also l. 782. In *Par. Lost*, ii. 82, the words, 'The event is feared,' &c., refer to an objection in a similar manner.

897. *To acquit themselves.*] To vindicate themselves.

898. *By ungodly deeds.*] Such as the treachery of Dalila.

Bare in thy guilt how foul must thou appear !

*Dal.* In argument with men a woman ever  
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

*Sams.* For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath—  
Witness when I was worried with thy peals. 906

*Dal.* I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken  
In what I thought would have succeeded best.  
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson ;  
Afford me place to show what recompense 910  
Toward thee I intend for what I have misdone,  
Misguided ; only what remains past cure  
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist  
To afflict thyself in vain. Though sight be lost,  
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed 915  
Where other senses want not their delights,  
At home, in leisure and domestic ease,  
Exempt from many a care and chance, to which  
Eyesight exposes daily men abroad.  
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting 920  
Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee  
From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide  
With me, where my redoubled love and care,  
With nursing diligence, to me glad office,  
May ever tend about thee to old age, 925  
With all things grateful cheered, and so supplied,  
That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

*Sams.* No, no, of my condition take no care ;

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904. *Goes by.*] We now say *thought* governs the clause, *what*  
*comes by.* *would have succeeded best.*

906. *Witness, &c.*] Let the 910. *Place.*] Opportunity.  
time when I was, &c., witness, *Locus penitentie.*  
that is, bear witness.

908. *In what, &c.*] Here the *Recompense.* Compensation.  
preposition *in* governs the whole 916. *Want not.*] Are not  
circumstance expressed in the without.  
rest of the line ; and the verb 922. *From forth.*] Forth from.  
*See note on l. 26.*



It fits not ; thou and I long since are twain.  
 Nor think me so unwary or accursed, 930  
 To bring my feet again into the snare  
 Where once I have been caught ; I know thy trains,  
 Though dearly to my cost, thy gins and toils.  
 Thy fair enchanted cup and warbling charms  
 No more on me have power, their force is nulled ;— 935  
 So much of adder's wisdom I have learned,  
 To fence my ear against thy sorceries.  
 If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men  
 Loved, honoured, feared me, thou alone couldst hate me,  
 Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and foregò me, 940  
 How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby  
 Deceivable, in most things as a child  
 Helpless, thence easily contemned and scorned,  
 And last neglected ! How wouldst thou insult,  
 When I must live uxorious to thy will 945  
 In perfect thralldom ! How again betray me,  
 Bearing my words and doings to the lords,  
 To gloss upon, and, censuring, frown or smile !  
 This jail I count the house of liberty  
 To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter. 950  
*Dal.* Let me approach, at least, to touch thy hand.  
*Sams.* Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake  
 My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.

932. *Trains.*] Snares.

933. *Toils.*] Nets.

934. *Thy fair enchanted cup,*  
*gc.*] This is an allusion to the  
 story of Circe and the Syrens ;  
 as much out of place in a speech  
 of Samson, as is the allusion to  
 Tantalus, *l.* 500.

936. *Adder's wisdom.*] 'They  
 are like the deaf adder, that  
 stoppeth her ear ; which will not  
 hearken to the voice of charmers,

charming never so wisely.'

Psaln lviii. 4.

945. *Uxorious, gc.*] Uxorious  
 in perfect thralldom to thy will.  
*Uxorious* means *yielding in all*  
*things to a wife.*

948. *To gloss upon.*] To in-  
 terpret in their own way.

*Censuring, gc.*] According as  
 they judge, to frown or smile  
 upon.

At distance I forgive thee, go with that;  
 Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works 955  
 It hath brought forth to make thee memorable  
 Among illustrious women, faithful wives.  
 Cherish thy hastened widowhood with the gold  
 Of matrimonial treason ;—so farewell.

*Dal.* I see thou art implacable, more deaf 960  
 To prayers than winds and seas ; yet winds to seas  
 Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore :  
 Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,  
 Eternal tempest, never to be calmed.  
 Why do I humble thus myself, and, suing 965  
 For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate ?  
 Bid go with evil omen, and the brand  
 Of infamy upon my name denounced.  
 To mix with thy concernments I desist  
 Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own. 970  
 Fame, if not double-faced, is double-mouthed,  
 And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds ;  
 On both his wings, one black, the other white,  
 Bears greatest names in his wild aery flight.  
 My name perhaps among the circumcised, 975  
 In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,  
 To all posterity may stand defamed,  
 With malediction mentioned, and the blot  
 Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced ;  
 But in my country, where I most desire, 980  
 In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,  
 I shall be named among the famousest  
 Of women, sung at solemn festivals,

963. *Still.*] Ever.

970. *Disapprove.*] Disregard.

973. *On both his wings, &c.*] Milton here makes Fame a male deity, and to be a proclaimer of

the two opposite characters which are so often ascribed to notable personages by their friends and foes, respectively.

Living and dead recorded, who to save  
 Her country from a fierce destroyer chose 985  
 Above the faith of wedlock-bands; my tomb  
 With odours visited and annual flowers;  
 Not less renowned than in Mount Ephraim  
 Jael, who with inhospitable guile  
 Smote Sisera sleeping, through the temples nailed. 990  
 Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy  
 The public marks of honour and reward  
 Conferred upon me, for the piety  
 Which to my country I was judged to have shown.  
 At this whoever envies or repines, 995  
 I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

*Chor.* She is gone,—a manifest serpent by her sting,  
 Discovered in the end, till now concealed!

*Sams.* So let her go. God sent her to debase me,  
 And aggravate my folly, who committed 1000  
 To such a viper his most sacred trust  
 Of secrecy, my safety and my life.

*Chor.* Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,  
 After offence returning, to regain  
 Love once possessed, nor can be easily 1005  
 Repulsed, without much inward passion felt  
 And secret sting of amorous remorse.

*Sams.* Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,  
 Not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

*Chor.* It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit, 1010  
 Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,  
 That woman's love can win or long inherit;

984. *Who to save, &c.*] Who chose to save, &c.; who preferred the deliverance of her country, &c.

988. *In Mount Ephraim.*] Deborah dwelt in Mount Ephraim.

Judges iv. 5.

991. *Heinous.*] Hateful. Fr. *haine*, hatred.

1003. *Though injurious.*] Even after having inflicted injury.

1012. *That woman's love, &c.*]

But what it is, hard is to say,  
 Harder to hit,—  
 Which way soever men refer it— 1015  
 Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day  
 Or seven though one should musing sit.  
 If any of these, or all, the Timnian bride  
 Had not so soon preferred  
 Thy paranymph, worthless to thee compared, 1020  
 Successor in thy bed,  
 Nor both so loosely disaffied  
 Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously  
 Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.  
 Is it for that such outward ornament 1025  
 Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts  
 Were left for haste unfinished, judgment scant,  
 Capacity not raised to apprehend  
 Or value what is best  
 In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong? 1030  
 Or was too much of self-love mixed,  
 Of constancy no root infixed,  
 That either they love nothing, or not long?  
 Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best  
 Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil, 1035

That can win or long possess  
 woman's love. To *inherit* often  
 meant simply to *possess*.

1015. *Refer it.*] Account for  
 it.

1016. *In one day, &c.*] Though  
 one should sit musing in one  
 day or in seven. See Judges xiv.  
 12.

1018. *If any of these, &c.*] If  
 it were any or all of these quali-  
 ties.

1020. *Thy paranymph.*] 'The  
 friend of the bridegroom.' John  
 iii. 29. The *paranymphus* was

the brideman, or director of a  
 marriage on the part of the  
 bridegroom. 'Samson's wife was  
 given to his companion, whom he  
 had used as his friend.' Judges  
 xiv. 20.

1022. *Nor both.*] Nor had  
 both; nor would both thy wives  
 have.

1024. *Fatal.*] Fate-involving.

1025. *For that.*] Because.

1030. *To affect the wrong.*] So  
 constituted as to affect, or like,  
 what is wrong in choice.

Soft, modest, meek, demure,  
 Once joined the contrary she proves, a thorn  
 Intestine, far within defensive arms  
 A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue  
 Adverse and turbulent; or by her charms 1040  
 Draws him awry enslaved  
 With dotage, and his sense depraved  
 To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.  
 What pilot so expert but needs must wreck,  
 Embarked with such a steers-mate at the helm ! 1045  
     Favoured of Heaven who finds  
 One virtuous, rarely found,  
 That in domestic good combines !  
 Happy that house ! his way to peace is smooth.  
 But virtue which breaks through all opposition, 1050  
 And all temptation can remove,  
 Most shines, and most is acceptable above.  
     Therefore God's universal law  
 Gave to the man despotic power  
 Over his female in due awe, 1055  
 Nor from that right to part an hour,  
 Smile she or lour.  
 So shall he least confusion draw  
 On his whole life, not swayed  
 By female usurpation, or dismayed.— 1060  
 But had we best retire ? I see a storm.  
     *Sams.* Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

1037. *Once joined.*] When once she is wedded.

1039. *A cleaving mischief.*] Dryden, who imitated many portions of Milton, seems to have thought that our poet here refers to the poisoned robe of Hercules. When we lay next us what we hold most dear,  
 Like Hercules envenomed shirts we wear,  
 And cleaving mischiefs.—*Aurengzebe*, il. l.

1046. *Who finds.*] Is he who finds.

1048. *That in domestic, &c.*] That associates or harmonises in matters of domestic comfort.

1056. *To part an hour.*] Was he to part for an hour.

1062. *Contracted.*] Brought.

*Chor.* But this another kind of tempest brings.

*Sams.* Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.

*Chor.* Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear 1065  
The bait of homied words: a rougher tongue  
Draws hitherward; I know him by his stride,  
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look  
Haughty, as is his pile high-built and proud.  
Comes he in peace? what wind hath blown him hither  
I less conjecture than when first I saw 1071  
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way.  
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

*Sams.* Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

*Chor.* His fraught we soon shall know, he now arrives.

*Har.* I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance, 1076  
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,  
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath,  
Men call me Harapha, of stock renowned  
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old 1080  
That Kiriathaim held; thou knowest me now,  
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard  
Of thy prodigious might and feats performed,  
Incredible to me, in this displeased  
That I was never present on the place 1085  
Of those encounters, where we might have tried  
Each other's force in camp or listed field;  
And now am come to see of whom such noise  
Hath walked about, and each limb to survey,  
If thy appearance answer loud report. 1090

1075. *His fraught.*] What he brings, or comes charged with.

1079. *Harapha.*] The word *repha* or *rapha*, among the Canaanites, denoted a giant; hence the name which Milton here assigns to the giant, or *rapha*, whose sons 'fell by the hand of

David,' &c. 2 Sam. xxi. 22, but who is here fictitiously introduced.

1080. *Og, or Anak, &c.*] See Gen. xiv. 5; Deut. ii. 10, and iii. 11.

1087. *Listed.*] Fenced round, as tilting ground.

*Sams.* The way to know were not to see but taste.

*Har.* Dost thou already single me? I thought  
 Gyves and the mill had tamed thee. Oh, that fortune  
 Had brought me to the field, where thou art famed  
 To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw! 1095  
 I should have forced thee soon with other arms,  
 Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown.  
 So had the glory of prowess been recovered  
 To Palestine, won by a Philistine  
 From the unforeskinned race, of whom thou bearest 1100  
 The highest name for valiant acts; that honour,  
 Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,  
 I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

*Sams.* Boast not of what thou wouldst have done, but do  
 What then thou wouldst; thou seest it in thy hand. 1105

*Har.* To combat with a blind man I disdain,  
 And thou hast need much washing to be touched.

*Sams.* Such usage as your honourable lords  
 Afford me, assassinated and betrayed;  
 Who durst not with their whole united powers 1110  
 In fight withstand me single and unarmed,  
 Nor in the house with chamber-ambushes  
 Close-banded durst attack me, no, not sleeping;  
 Till they had hired a woman with their gold,  
 Breaking her marriage-faith, to circumvent me. 1115

1099. *Palestine.*] The name here denotes the territory of the Philistines.

1105. *In thy hand.*] Now put in thy power.

1108. *Such usage.*] It is such usual state.

1109. *Assassinated.*] A word derived from the Assassins, a secret military and religious

order, called also Ismaelites, which was formed in Persia in the eleventh century. What we now call assassination was so expressly allowed, and so commonly practised by them, that the Crusaders introduced the name *assassin* into Europe as a general appellation for a secret murderer.  
 1113. *Close.*] Secretly.

Therefore, without feigned shifts, let be assigned  
 Some narrow place enclosed, where sight may give thee,  
 Or rather flight, no great advantage on me ;  
 Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet  
 And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon, 1120  
 Vantbrace and greaves, and gauntlet, add thy spear,  
 A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield ;  
 I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,  
 And raise such outcries on thy clattered iron,  
 Which long shall not withhold me from thy head, 1125  
 That in a little time, while breath remains thee,  
 Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath, to boast  
 Again in safety what thou wouldst have done  
 To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

*Har.* Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms, 1130  
 Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,  
 Their ornament and safety, had not spells  
 And black enchantments, some magician's art,  
 Armed thee or charmed thee strong : which thou from  
 Heaven

Feignedst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair, 1135  
 Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs  
 Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back  
 Of chafed wild-boars, or ruffled porcupines.

*Sams.* I know no spells, use no forbidden arts ;

1116. *Without feigned shifts.*] Without any pretence about my blindness, &c.

1120. *Brigandine, &c.*] A brigandine was a coat of mail ; an habergeon, armour for the neck and shoulders ; vantbrace, *avant bras*, mail sleeves ; greaves, armour for the legs ; gauntlets, iron gloves.

1122. *Seven-times-folded shield.*]

As was the shield of Ajax, 'Clypei dominus septemplicis,' Ovid, *Met.* xiii. 2.

1129. *But shalt.*] But that thou shalt.

1134. *Which.*] The relative here refers to the adjective *strong*, and means *which circumstance of being strong*.

1139. *I know no spells, &c.*] According to the ritual of the



My trust is in the Living God, who gave me 1140  
 At my nativity this strength, diffused  
 No less through all my sinews, joints, and bones,  
 Than thine, while I preserved these locks unshorn,  
 The pledge of my unviolated vow.  
 For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy God, 1145  
 Go to his temple, invoke his aid  
 With solemnest devotion, spread before him  
 How highly it concerns his glory now  
 To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,  
 Which I to be the power of Israel's God 1150  
 Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,  
 Offering to combat thee his champion bold,  
 With the utmost of his godhead seconded :  
 Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow  
 Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine. 1155  
*Har.* Presume not on thy God. Whate'er he be,  
 Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off  
 Quite from his people, and delivered up  
 Into thy enemies' hand ; permitted them  
 To put out both thine eyes, and fettered send thee 1160  
 Into the common prison, there to grind  
 Among the slaves and asses, thy comrades,  
 As good for nothing else, no better service,  
 With those thy boisterous locks ; no worthy match  
 For valour to assail, nor by the sword 1165  
 Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour,  
 But by the barber's razor best subdued.

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Duello, combatants were required to be the power, &c.

1163. *No better service.*] The noun here is an exclamatory nominative.

1164. *Boisterous.*] Violent.

1165. *By the sword.*] To assail by the sword.

1150. *Which I, &c.*] Which I avow to be no enchantment, but

*Sams.* All these indignities, for such they are,  
 From thine, these evils I deserve and more,  
 Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me 1170  
 Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon,  
 Whose ear is ever open, and his eye  
 Gracious to re-admit the suppliant;  
 In confidence whereof I once again  
 Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight, 1175  
 By combat to decide whose god is God,  
 Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

*Har.* Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting  
 He will accept thee to defend his cause,  
 A murderer, a revolter, and a robber. 1180

*Sams.* Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove me  
 these?

*Har.* Is not thy nation subject to our lords?  
 Their magistrates confessed it, when they took thee  
 As a league-breaker, and delivered bound  
 Into our hands. For hadst thou not committed 1185  
 Notorious murder on those thirty men  
 At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,  
 Then like a robber strippedst them of their robes?  
 The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,  
 Went up with armed powers thee only seeking, 1190  
 To others did no violence nor spoil.

*Sams.* Among the daughters of the Philistines  
 I chose a wife, which argued me no foe;  
 And in your city held my nuptial feast.  
 But your ill-meaning politician lords, 1195  
 Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,

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1189. *From thine.*] From thy liant in tongue.  
 people.

1178. *That thou dost.*] Is that Judges xiv. 19.  
 which thou dost.

1196. *Bridal.*] A bridal is a  
 1181. *Tongue-doughty.*] Va- wedding feast.

Appointed to await me thirty spies,  
 Who, threatening cruel death, constrained the bride  
 To wring from me, and tell to them, my secret,  
 That solved the riddle which I had proposed. 1200  
 When I perceived all set on enmity,  
 As on my enemies, wherever chanced,  
 I used hostility, and took their spoil,  
 To pay my underminers in their coin.  
 My nation was subjected to your lords— 1205  
 It was the force of conquest; force with force  
 Is well ejected when the conquered can.  
 But I, a private person, whom my country  
 As a league-breaker gave up bound, presumed  
 Single rebellion, and did hostile acts— 1210  
 I was no private, but a person raised,  
 With strength sufficient, and command from Heaven,  
 To free my country; if their servile minds  
 Me their deliverer sent would not receive,  
 But to their masters gave me up for nought, 1215  
 The unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.  
 I was to do my part from Heaven assigned,  
 And had performed it, if my known offence  
 Had not disabled me, not all your force.  
 These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant, 1220

1197. *Thirty spies.*] Judges  
 xiv. 11.

1200. *That.*] A relative pronoun  
 referring to *them*.

1202. *As on, &c.*] I used hostility  
 as on, &c.

*Chanced.*] Accidentally met  
 or found.

1204. *To pay my underminers,*  
*&c.*] To pay, with apparel of  
 their own countrymen, those who  
 clandestinely found out my riddle.

1216. *Whence, &c.*] And

hence to this day they remain  
 subject to the Philistines.

1218. *And had.*] And would  
 have.

*My known.*] I conjecture that  
 Milton here dictated *mine own*,  
 and was mistaken by his amanu-  
 ensis. The construction is, 'Not  
 all your force had (*would have*)  
 disabled me, if mine own offence  
 had not disabled me.'

1220. *These shifts refuted.*] These  
 pretexts being refuted by

Though by his blindness maimed for high attempts,  
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,  
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

*Har.* With thee, a man condemned, a slave enrolled,  
Due by the law to capital punishment! 1225  
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

*Sams.* Camest thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,  
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?  
Come nearer, part not hence so slight informed,  
But take good heed my hand survey not thee. 1230

*Har.* O Baal-zebub! can my ears unused  
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

*Sams.* No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand  
Fear I incurable. Bring up thy van;  
My heels are fettered, but my fist is free. 1235

*Har.* This insolence other kind of answer fits.

*Sams.* Go, baffled coward! lest I run upon thee,  
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,  
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,  
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down, 1240

which you attempt to prove me  
'a murderer,' &c.

*Thy appellant.]* Thy challenger.

1222. *Defies thee thrice.]* According to the old laws of the Duello, when the challenge was given, the trumpet was sounded thrice. In Shakspeare's *K. Lear*, v. 3, Edgar enters to fight with Edmund at 'the third sound of the trumpet.'

1223. *Enforce.]* Enforcement.

1229. *Part.]* Depart. *Fr. partir.*

1231. *Baal-zebub.]* One of the gods of the Philistines; he had an oracular temple at Accaron or Ekron.

1234. *Bring up thy van.]* Advance thy front.

1237. *Baffled coward.]* Baffled means degraded or disgraced, as a recreant knight. Originally it meant *hung up by the heels and beaten*, a punishment inflicted (often, however, only in effigy) on recreant knights.

Then, letting him arise like abject thrall,  
He 'gan to him object his heinous crime,  
And to revile, and rate, and recreant call,  
And lastly to despoil of knightly banner-  
all.

And after all, for greater infamy,  
He by the heels him hung upon a tree,  
And baffled.—Spenser's *F. Q.* VI. vii. 26, 27.

A *bannorall* was a standard like the tail of a swallow.

1238. *Bulk without spirit vast.]* Thou vast bulk void of spirit.

To the hazard of thy brains and shattered sides.

*Har.* By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament  
These braveries, in irons loaden on thee.

*Chor.* His giantship is gone somewhat crest-fallen,  
Stalking with less unconscionable strides, 1245  
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.

*Sams.* I dread him not, nor all his giant brood,  
Though fame divulge him father of five sons,  
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.

*Chor.* He will directly to the lords, I fear, 1250  
And with malicious counsel stir them up  
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.

*Sams.* He must allege some cause, and offered fight  
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise  
Whether he durst accept the offer or not; 1255  
And that he durst not plain enough appeared.

Much more affliction than already felt  
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain;  
If they intend advantage of my labours,  
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping, 1260  
With no small profit daily to my owners.

But, come what will, my deadliest foe will prove  
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence;  
The worst that he can give, to me the best.  
Yet so it may fall out, because their end 1265

1242. *By Astaroth.*] Here Harapha swears by a Phœnician goddess whom the Philistines revered.

1245. *Unconscionable.*] Huge; enormous.

1248. *Father of five sons.*] These were Ishbi-benob, Saph or Sippai, Lahmi, Goliath, and the giant 'whose fingers and toes were four-and-twenty.' 1 Chron. xx. 4-8; 2 Sam. xxi. 16-22.

1259. *Intend.*] Desire to have. 1262. *Come what will.*] Come is here an imperative of the 3rd person, having for its subject the noun clause 'what will [come].'

1263. *Rid.*] Remove. An old sense of the term.

1265. *Because their end, &c.*] That because the motive of those who attempt the deed is hatred towards me, not a wish to rid me of my miseries by death.

Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine  
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

*Chor.* O how comely it is, and how reviving  
To the spirits of just men long oppressed,  
When God into the hands of their deliverer 1270  
Puts invincible might,

To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,  
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,  
Hardy and industrious to support  
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue 1275  
The righteous, and all such as honour truth !  
He all their ammunition

And feats of war defeats,  
With plain heroic magnitude of mind  
And celestial vigour armed, 1280

Their armories and magazines contemns,  
Renders them useless ; while  
With winged expedition,  
Swift as the lightning glance, he executes  
His errand on the wicked, who surprised 1285  
Lose their defence, distracted and amazed.

But patience is more oft the exercise  
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,  
Making them each his own deliverer,  
And victor over all 1290

That tyranny or fortune can inflict.  
Either of these is in thy lot,  
Samson, with might endued

1268. *O how comely, &c.*] Warton was of opinion, 'that Milton in this chorus was writing a panegyric on the memory of Cromwell and his deliverance, instead of reflecting on the recent blessings of the Restoration.'

1278. *And feats of war defeats.*] We have here, as Todd observes, the same kind of unpleasing jingle as 'tempted our attempt,' *Par. Lost*, i. 642.

1292. *Either of these.*] Either 'might' or 'patience.'

Above the sons of men; but sight bereaved  
 May chance to number thee with those 1295  
 Whom patience finally must crown.

'This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,  
 Labouring thy mind  
 More than the working day thy hands.  
 And yet perhaps more trouble is behind; 1300  
 For I descry this way

Some other tending; in his hand  
 A sceptre or quaint staff he bears,  
 Comes on amain, speed in his look.  
 By his habit I discern him now 1305  
 A public officer, and now at hand.  
 His message will be short and voluble.

*Off.* Hebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.

*Chor.* His manacles remark him, there he sits.

*Off.* Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say: 1310  
 This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,  
 With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games:  
 Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,  
 And now some public proof thereof require,  
 To honour this great feast and great assembly. 1315  
 Rise therefore with all speed, and come along,  
 Where I will see thee heartened and fresh clad,

1294. *Bereaved.*] Being left from thee.

1296. *Finally must crown.*] See James i. 12.

1301. *This way.*] This expression—*hither*, is adverbial to 'tending.'

1303. *Quaint.*] Curious; strange.

1309. *Remark him.*] Mark or distinguish him.

1312. *With sacrifices, &c.*] *Triumphs* denoted shows, such as

masks, revels, bonfires, rejoicings, &c. One of Bacon's Essays is 'Of Masks and Triumphs.' *Pomp* means processions. So in Shaksp. *Mids. N. Dr.* i. 1, 'With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling;' 3 *K. Henry VI.* v. 7, 'Spend the time with stately triumphs, mirthful comic shows.' Hence, Falstaff, (1 *K. Henry IV.* iii. 3) says to Bardolph, 'O, thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire-light!'

To appear as fits before the illustrious lords.

*Sams.* Thou knowest I am a Hebrew; therefore tell them,  
Our Law forbids at their religious rites 1320  
My presence; for that cause I cannot come.

*Off.* This answer, be assured, will not content them.

*Sams.* Have they not sword-players, and every sort  
Of gymnastic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,  
Jugglers and dancers, antics, mummers, minnies, 1325  
But they must pick me out, with shackles tired,  
And over-laboured at their public mill,  
To make them sport with blind activity?  
Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels  
On my refusal, to distress me more, 1330  
Or make a game of my calamities?

Return the way thou camest, I will not come.

*Off.* Regard thyself; this will offend them highly.

*Sams.* Myself! my conscience and internal peace.  
Can they think me so broken, so debased 1335  
With corporal servitude, that my mind ever  
Will condescend to such absurd commands?—  
Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,  
And, in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief,  
To show them feats, and play before their god— 1340  
The worst of all indignities yet on me  
Joined with extreme contempt?—I will not come.

1325. *Jugglers.*] Milton may perhaps intend here the modern sense of the word. *Juggler*, however, originally meant a jester, or droll; Lat. *joculator*, Fr. *jongleur*.

*Mummers.*] The mummers, originally, were persons in theatrical dress, who made sport by signs and gestures without speaking. They used to go about at

Christmas to get money or good cheer. In Shaksp. *Coriolanus*, ii. 1, Menenius says, 'If you chance to be pinched with the colic, you make faces like mummers.'

*Mimics.*] Stage-players. So in Shaksp. *Mids. N. Dr.* iii. 2, 'And forth my mimic comes.'

1335. *Broken.*] Tamed.



*Off.* My message was imposed on me with speed,  
Brooks no delay. Is this thy resolution?

*Sams.* So take it with what speed thy message needs. 1345

*Off.* I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

*Sams.* Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

*Chor.* Consider, Samson; matters now are strained

Up to the highth, whether to hold or break.

He's gone, and who knows how he may report 1350

Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?

Expect another message more imperious,

More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.

*Sams.* Shall I abuse this consecrated gift

Of strength, again returning with my hair, 1355

After my great transgression? so requite

Favour renewed, and add a greater sin

By prostituting holy things to idols,

A Nazarite, in place abominable,

Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon? 1360

Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,—

What act more execrably unclean, profane!

*Chor.* Yet with this strength thou servest the Philistines,  
Idolatrous, uncircumcised, unclean.

*Sams.* Not in their idol-worship, but by labour 1365

Honest and lawful to deserve my food

Of those who have me in their civil power.

*Chor.* Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.

*Sams.* Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds.

But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon, 1370

Not dragging? the Philistian lords command—

1346. *What.*] As to, or respecting, what. See note on l. 1408.

1361. *Besides, &c.*] What act would be more execrably, &c., besides its being how vile, &c.

1369. *The sentence.*] The maxim. So in Shaksp. *Merch. of Ven.* i. 2, Portia calls Nerissa's maxims 'good sentences;' and in *Othello*, i. 3, 'lay a sentence' means lay down a maxim.

Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,  
 I do it freely, venturing to displease  
 God for the fear of man, and man prefer,  
 Set God behind ; which, in his jealousy 1375  
 Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.  
 Yet that he may dispense with me, or thee,  
 Present in temples at idolatrous rites,  
 For some important cause, thou needest not doubt.

*Chor.* How thou wilt here come off surmounts my  
 reach. 1380

*Sams.* Be of good courage ; I begin to feel  
 Some rousing motions in me, which dispose  
 To something extraordinary my thoughts.  
 I with this messenger will go along,  
 Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour 1385  
 Our Law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.  
 If there be aught of presage in the mind,  
 This day will be remarkable in my life  
 By some great act, or of my days the last.

*Chor.* In time thou hast resolved, the man returns. 1390

*Off.* Samson, this second message from our lords  
 To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,  
 Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,  
 And dardest thou at our sending and command  
 Dispute thy coming ? Come without delay ; 1395  
 Or we shall find such engines to assail  
 And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,  
 Though thou wert firmlier fastened than a rock.

*Sams.* I could be well content to try their art,

1374. *Prefer.*] I prefer.

1375. *Which, in his jealousy,*  
*&c.*] Which conduct, if unre-  
 pent, shall never find forgive-  
 ness in the jealousy with which  
 He maintains his glory.

1377. *Dispense with.*] Excuse ;  
 tolerate ; forgive. So Naaman

obtained a dispensation from  
 Elisha, to attend his master in  
 the temple of Rimmon. See  
 2 Kings v. 17-19.

1399. *To try their art.*] To  
 try what their scheme of com-  
 pulsion could do with me.

Which to no few of them would prove pernicious. 1400  
 Yet, knowing their advantages too many,  
 Because they shall not trail me through their streets  
 Like a wild beast, I am content to go.  
 Masters' commands come with a power resistless  
 To such as owe them absolute subjection; 1405  
 And for a life who will not change his purpose?  
 So mutable are all the ways of men.—  
 Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply  
 Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.  
*Off.* I praise thy resolution. Doff these links. 1410  
 By this compliance thou wilt win the lords  
 To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.  
*Sams.* Brethren, farewell. Your company along  
 I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them  
 To see me girt with friends; and how the sight 1415  
 Of me, as of a common enemy  
 So dreaded once, may now exasperate them,  
 I know not. Lords are lordliest in their wine;  
 And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired

1400. *Which.*] This relative has for its antecedent the expression 'to try their art.'

1406. *And for a life, &c.*] And who will not alter his purpose to save his own life? Samson here uses deceit.

1408. *Yet this be sure.*] *This* for *respecting this*, or *as to this*, is an imitation of the Latin accusative of respect. Compare *l.* 1346, 'I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.'

1410. *Doff.*] *Doff* is a contraction of *do off*, as *don* is of *do on*. So Shakspeare, *Hamlet*, iv. 5, 'Then up he rose and donned his clothes.' Latimer, *Sermon*

for 21st Sunday after Trinity, 'We must do on the armour of God.' Udall's *Roister Doister*, iv. 7, 'Do not off your harness, sirs.' Chaucer's *Cook's Tale*, 267, 'Do on thy hose.'

1412. *To favour.*] To favour thee.

1413. *Along.*] This adverb modifies the verbal sense implied in the noun *company*:—your accompanying me along. Compare such expressions as *my arrival here*, *my departure hence*, *truly man* (= *truly human*), &c. Nouns, unless implying a verbal or an adjectival notion do not properly admit modification by adverbs.

With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned; 1420  
 No less the people, on their holy-days,  
 Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable.  
 Happen what may, of me expect to hear  
 Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy  
 Our God, our Law, my nation, or myself; 1425  
 The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

*Chor.* Go, and the Holy One

Of Israel be thy guide,  
 To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name  
 Great among the Heathen round; 1430  
 Send thee the Angel of thy birth, to stand  
 Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field  
 Rode up in flames, after his message told  
 Of thy conception, and be now a shield  
 Of fire; that Spirit, that first rushed on thee 1435  
 In the camp of Dan,

Be efficacious in thee now at need!  
 For never was from Heaven imparted  
 Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,  
 As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen. 1440

But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste  
 With youthful steps? much livelier than ere while  
 He seems;—supposing here to find his son?  
 Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

*Man.* Peace with you, brethren! My inducement hither  
 Was not at present here to find my son, 1446  
 By order of the lords new parted hence,

1426. *The last of me or no.*] This refers to the words, 'Happen what may:—whether the last of me will happen or not happen.

1430. *Great.*] As a great name.

1433. *After his message told.*] Told is a past participle. Milton

frequently thus imitates such Latin construction as 'ab urbe condita.' See the Editor's 'Six Cantos of Spenser,' p. 3, note 8.

1435. *That first rushed, &c.*] Judges xiv. 6, 'And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him,' &c.

To come and play before them at their feast.  
 I heard all as I came, the city rings,  
 And numbers thither flock; I had no will, 1450  
 Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.  
 But that which moved my coming now was chiefly  
 To give ye part with me what hope I have  
 With good success to work his liberty.

*Chor.* That hope would much rejoice us to partake 1455  
 With thee. Say, reverend Sire, we thirst to hear.

*Man.* I have attempted one by one the lords,  
 Either at home, or through the high street passing,  
 With supplication prone and father's tears,  
 To accept of ransom for my son their prisoner. 1460  
 Some much averse I found, and wondrous harsh,  
 Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;—  
 That part most revered Dagon and his priests—  
 Others more moderate seeming, but their aim  
 Private reward, for which both God and State 1465  
 They easily would set to sale; a third  
 More generous far and civil, who confessed  
 They had enough revenged, having reduced  
 Their foe to misery beneath their fears;  
 The rest was magnanimity to remit, 1470  
 If some convenient ransom were proposed.  
 What noise or shout was that? it tore the sky.

*Chor.* Doubtless the people shouting to behold

1447. *Parted.*] Departed; others,  
 gone.

1453. *To give ye part with me.*] To impart or communicate to you.

1455. *That hope, &c.*] To partake that hope with thee would, &c.

1459. *Supplication prone.*] Bending supplication.

1464. *Others.*] I found

1466. *A third.*] A third portion or party.

1469. *To misery beneath their fears.*] To a state of misery too low to be formidable.

1470. *The rest, &c.*] To omit the rest, to let him go now, was magnanimity.

1471 *Convenient.*] Suitable.

Their once great dread, captive and blind before them;  
Or at some proof of strength before them shown. 1475

*Man.* His ransom, if my whole inheritance  
May compass it, shall willingly be paid  
And numbered down. Much rather I shall choose  
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,  
And he in that calamitous prison left. 1480  
No, I am fixed not to part hence without him.  
For his redemption all my patrimony,  
If need be, I am ready to forego  
And quit. Not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

*Chor.* Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons, 1485  
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all;  
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age,  
Thou in old-age carest how to nurse thy son,  
Made older than thy age through eyesight lost.

*Man.* It shall be my delight to tend his eyes, 1490  
And view him sitting in the house, ennobled  
With all those high exploits by him achieved,  
And on his shoulders waving down those locks,  
That of a nation armed the strength contained.  
And I persuade me, God had not permitted 1495  
His strength again to grow up with his hair,  
Garrisoned round about him like a camp  
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose  
To use him further yet in some great service;  
Not to sit idle, with so great a gift 1500  
Useless, and thence ridiculous, about him.  
And since his strength with eyesight was not lost,  
God will restore him eyesight to his strength.

*Chor.* Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem vain,  
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon 1505

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1484. *Not wanting him.*] If I be not without him.

Conceived, agreeable to a father's love,  
In both which we, as next, participate.

*Man.* I know your friendly minds and—Oh, what noise!

Mercy of heaven, what hideous noise was that!  
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout. 1510

*Chor.* Noise call it you, or universal groan,  
As if the whole inhabitation perished!  
Blood, death, and deathful deeds, are in that noise,  
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

*Man.* Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise. 1515  
Oh! it continues, they have slain my son!

*Chor.* Thy son is rather slaying them; that outcry  
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

*Man.* Some dismal accident it needs must be.  
What shall we do, stay here or run and see? 1520

*Chor.* Best keep together here, lest, running thither,  
We unawares run into danger's mouth.  
This evil on the Philistines is fallen;  
From whom could else a general cry be heard?  
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here; 1525  
From other hands we need not much to fear.  
What if, his eyesight—for to Israel's God  
Nothing is hard—by miracle restored,  
He now be dealing dole among his foes,

1512. *The whole inhabitation.*] The whole of the inmates, or of the assembled occupants.

1514. *At the utmost point.*] *Fr. à l'outrance.*

1521. *Best keep together here.*] To keep together here is best. The infinitive *keep* answers to the preceding infinitive *do*.

1527. *His eyesight.*] This is a nominative absolute: his eye-

sight being restored.

1529. *Dealing dole.*] This is an example of a verb governing a cognate noun: *dole* signifying *what is dealt*. Compare *To dream a dream, to die the death, to live a life, &c.* In the old proverbial blessing 'Happy man be his dole!' the meaning is, *May happy man be the lot dealt out to him.*

And over heaps of slaughtered walk his way ! 1530

*Man.* That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

*Chor.* Yet God hath wrought things as incredible  
For his people of old : what hinders now ?

*Man.* He can, I know, but doubt to think he will ;  
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief. 1535  
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

*Chor.* Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner ;  
For evil news rides post, while good news bates.  
And to our wish I see one hither speeding ;  
A Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe. 1540

*Mess.* Oh, whither shall I run, or which way fly  
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,  
Which erst my eyes beheld, and yet behold ?  
For dire imagination still pursues me.  
But providence or instinct of nature seems, 1545  
Or reason, though disturbed, and scarce consulted,  
To have guided me aright, I know not how,  
To thee first, reverend Manoa, and to these  
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining—  
As at some distance from the place of horror, 1550  
So in the sad event too much concerned.

*Man.* The accident was loud, and here before thee  
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not.  
No preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

*Mess.* It would burst forth ; but I recover breath 1555  
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

*Man.* Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

1535. *Subscribe.*] Assent.

1537. *Of good or bad, &c.*] Where the notice is of good or bad so great, our stay will bring notice of had the sooner.

1538. *Bates.*] Abates or loses speed.

1549. *Whom here, &c.*] Whom

I knew to be remaining here.

1550. *As, &c.*] *As* and *so* are here nearly equivalent to *though* and *yet*.

1554. *Needs.*] Is needful.

1557. *The circumstance.*] How it came about ; that wherewith it



*Mess.* Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fallen,  
All in a moment overwhelmed and fallen.

*Man.* Sad ; but thou knowest to Israelites not saddest  
The desolation of a hostile city. 1561

*Mess.* Feed on that first, there may be grief in surfeit.

*Man.* Relate by whom.

*Mess.* By Samson.

*Man.* That still lessens 1565  
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

*Mess.* Ah ! Manoa, I refrain too suddenly  
To utter what will come at last too soon ;  
Lest evil tidings, with too rude irruption  
Hitting thy aged ear, should pierce too deep. 1570

*Man.* Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.

*Mess.* Take then the worst in brief, Samson is dead.

*Man.* The worst indeed ! Oh, all my hopes defeated  
To free him hence ! but Death who sets all free  
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge. 1575

What windy joy this day had I conceived,  
Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves  
Abortive, as the first-born bloom of spring  
Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost !  
Yet, ere I give the reins to grief, say first 1580  
How died he ; death to life is crown or shame.

All by him fell, thou sayest ; by whom fell he ?  
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound ?

*Mess.* Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

*Man.* Wearied with slaughter then, or how ? explain.

*Mess.* By his own hands. 1586

*Man.* Self-violence ? What cause

was accompanied ; its surroundings.

1560. *Not saddest.* ] Is not the  
saddest thing that can happen.

1567. *Too suddenly, &c.* ] From  
uttering too suddenly.

1576. *What windy joy, &c.* ]  
An allusion to Isaiah xxvi. 18.

Brought him so soon at variance with himself  
Among his foes ?

*Mess.* Inevitable cause, 1590  
At once both to destroy and be destroyed.  
The edifice, where all were met to see him,  
Upon their heads and on his own he pulled.

*Man.* Oh, lastly over-strong against thyself!  
A dreadful way thou tookest to thy revenge. 1595  
More than enough we know ; but while things yet  
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,  
Eye-witness of what first or last was done,  
Relation more particular and distinct.

*Mess.* Occasions drew me early to this city, 1600  
And, as the gates I entered with sunrise,  
The morning trumpets festival proclaimed,  
Through each high street. Little I had dispatched,  
When all abroad was rumoured that this day  
Samson should be brought forth, to show the people 1605  
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games.  
I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded  
Not to be absent at that spectacle.

The building was a spacious theatre,  
Half-round, on two main pillars vaulted high, 1610  
With seats where all the lords, and each degree  
Of sort, might sit in order to behold ;  
The other side was open, where the throng  
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand ;  
I among these aloof obscurely stood. 1615  
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice  
Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,

---

1594. *O lastly over-strong.*] testimony.  
Samson had been *over-weak* 1607. *Minded not to be absent.*]   
against himself *at first*, when he Being minded to be present, or   
revealed the secret of his strength. bent on being present.  
1598. *Eye-witness.*] Ocular 1614. *Banks.*] Benches.

When to their sports they turned. Immediately  
 Was Samson as a public servant brought,  
 In their state livery clad; before him pipes 1620  
 And timbrels; on each side went armed guards,  
 Both horse and foot, before him and behind  
 Archers and slingers, cataphracts and spears.  
 At sight of him the people with a shout  
 Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise, 1625  
 Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.  
 He, patient but undaunted, where they led him  
 Came to the place; and what was set before him  
 Which without help of eye might be assayed,  
 To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed, 1630  
 All with incredible, stupendous force,  
 None daring to appear antagonist.  
 At length for intermission sake they led him  
 Between the pillars; he his guide requested—  
 For so from such as nearer stood we heard,— 1635  
 As over-tired, to let him lean a while  
 With both his arms on those two massy pillars,  
 That to the arched roof gave main support.  
 He unsuspecting led him; which when Samson  
 Felt in his arms, with head a while inclined 1640  
 And eyes fast fixed he stood, as one who prayed,  
 Or some great matter in his mind revolved.  
 At last with head erect thus cried aloud :—  
 ‘Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed  
 I have performed, as reason was, obeying, 1645  
 Not without wonder or delight beheld;  
 Now of my own accord such other trial  
 I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater,

1623. *Cataphracts*.] Men and horses in armour, Gr. *καταφράκταις* from *καταφράσσειν*, to cover, to protect.

1628. *What was set, &c.*] He still, or always, performed what was set before him to heave, &c.

As with amaze shall strike all who behold.'  
 This uttered, straining all his nerves he bowed; 1650  
 As, with the force of winds and waters pent,  
 When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars  
 With horrible convulsion to and fro  
 He tugged, he shook, till down they came and drew  
 The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder, 1655  
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,  
 Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,  
 Their choice nobility and flower, not only  
 Of this but each Philistian city round,  
 Met from all parts to solemnize this feast. 1660  
 Samson, with these immixed, inevitably  
 Pulled down the same destruction on himself;  
 The vulgar only 'scaped who stood without.

*Chor.* Oh, dearly bought revenge, yet glorious!  
 Living or dying thou hast fulfilled 1665  
 The work for which thou wast foretold  
 To Israel; and now liest victorior  
 Among thy slain self-killed;  
 Not willingly, but tangled in the fold  
 Of dire Necessity, whose law in death conjoined 1670  
 Thee with thy slaughtered foes, in number more  
 Than all thy life had slain before.

1 *Semichor.* While their hearts were jocund and sublime,  
 Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,  
 And fat regorged of bulls and goats, 1675

1649. *Shall strike.*] Dunster suspects a quibble here.

1651. *As with the force, &c.*] As when mountains tremble with the force of pent winds and waters. Compare *Par. Lost*, vi. 196, 'Winds underground, or waters forcing way, sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat.'

1671. *In number more, &c.*]

'So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.' Judges xvi. 30.

1673. The *Semichorus* was a subordinate chorus composed of a few singers.

1675. *And fat regorged.*] And while they gorged the fat,

Chanting their idol, and preferring  
 Before our living Dread, who dwells  
 In Silo, his bright sanctuary,  
 Among them He a spirit of phrenzy sent,  
 Who hurt their minds, 1680  
 And urged them on with mad desire  
 To call in haste for their destroyer.  
 They, only set on sport and play,  
 Unweetingly importuned  
 Their own destruction to come speedy upon them : 1685  
 So fond are mortal men,  
 Fallen into wrath divine,  
 As their own ruin on themselves to invite ;  
 Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,  
 And with blindness internal struck. 1690  
 2 *Semichôr*. But he, though blind of sight,  
 Despised, and thought extinguished quite,  
 With inward eyes illuminated,  
 His fiery virtue roused  
 From under ashes into sudden flame ; 1695  
 And as an evening dragon came,  
 Assailant on the perched roosts,  
 And nests in order ranged  
 Of tame villatic fowl, but as an eagle

1677. *Dread*.] Object of reverential awe. So Spenser calls Queen Elizabeth, 'Dearest Dread.'

1678. *In Silo*.] The tabernacle was for 300 years in Silo, or Shiloh, a city of the Ephraimites. See Joshua xviii. 1.

1686. *So fond*.] So silly.

1688. *As their own ruin, &c.*] So fond are mortal men, &c., as to invite, &c.

1689. *Insensate left, &c.*] Left insensate or to a reprobate sense. Ephes. iv. 18, 19 ; Rom. i. 28.

1696. *And as an evening dragon, &c.*] We have no doubt that Milton dictated, 'And not as an evening dragon,' &c. So Calton and others think. The poet seems to mean that Samson did not come upon the Philistines insidiously and in the dark, as an evening dragon assails sleeping fowl, but like an eagle in cloudless day, bolted thunder on their heads, or struck them as with a thunder bolt.

1699. *Villatic fowl*.] Domes-

His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads. 1700  
 So Virtue, given for lost,  
 Depressed and overthrown, as seemed—  
 Like that self-begotten bird,  
 In the Arabian woods embost,  
 That no second knows nor third, 1705  
 And lay erewhile a holocaust,  
 From out her ashy womb now teemed,—  
 Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most

tic fowl; fowl reared in the country. Lat. *villaticus*, belonging to a country house. The Roman writers on husbandry and natural history called them *villatice gallinae* or *villatice alites*.

1701. *Given for lost.*] Given up for a lost thing. So in *Par. Lost*, ii. 14, 'I give not heaven for lost.'

1702. *Overthrown, as seemed.*] The clause 'as seemed,' = *seemingly*, is adverbial to 'overthrown.'

1703. *That self-begotten bird.*] The fabled Arabian Phoenix was said to exist single, and, at the end of a hundred, some say a thousand, years, to make a nest of spices in which it was self-consumed, and gave place to a new Phoenix springing, as if by resurrection, from the ashes of the old.

*Phoenix* is a Greek word signifying a palm-tree, and it was in a particular tree of this kind that the bird was supposed to nestle. Shakspeare has several allusions to the Phoenix. Thus, in *K. Henry VIII.* v. 4, 'When the bird of wonder dies, the maiden Phoenix, her ashes new-create another heir;' *K. Richard III.* iv. 4, 'In that nest of spicery

they shall breed selves of themselves;' *Tempest*, iii. 3, 'That in Arabia there is one tree the Phoenix' throne, one Phoenix at this hour reigning there.'

1704. *Embost.*] Inclosed, or embosomed. Perhaps from the Ital. *bosco*, a wood or thicket. But Milton elsewhere has *imbosked*, denoting *concealed in a wood*; and *embost* is more probably from the old Fr. *emboister*, to put in a case or box. So Spenser's *F. Q.*, I. iii. 24, 'A knight her met in mighty arms embost;' VI. iv. 40, 'Vowing that never he in bed again his limbs would rest, nor lie in ease embost.'

1705. *That no second, &c.*] So transcendently wonderful, that no other bird, in comparison, can be called second to it, or even third. Milton here had in his mind the sentiment of Horace respecting Jupiter, 'Nec viget quicquam simile, aut secundum.' *Od.* I. xii. 18.

1706. *A holocaust.*] A 'whole burnt-offering.' Psalm li. 19.

1707. *Now teemed.*] But is now brought forth.

1708. *Revives.*] The nominative to this verb is 'Virtue.'

When most unactive deemed ;  
 And, though her body die, her fame survives, 1710  
 A secular bird, ages of lives.

*Man.* Come, come ; no time for lamentation now,  
 Nor much more cause : Samson hath quit himself  
 Like Samson, and heroically hath finished  
 A life heroic, on his enemies 1715

Fully revenged ; hath left them years of mourning,  
 And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor,  
 Through all Philistian bounds ; to Israël  
 Honour hath left and freedom, let but them  
 Find courage to lay hold on this occasion ; 1720  
 To himself and father's house eternal fame.

And, which is best and happiest yet, all this  
 With God not parted from him, as was feared,  
 But favouring and assisting to the end.  
 Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail 1725

Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,  
 Dispraise or blame ; nothing but well and fair,  
 And what may quiet us in a death so noble.  
 Let us go find the body, where it lies  
 Soaked in his enemies' blood, and from the stream 1730  
 With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off  
 The clotted gore. I with what speed the while—

1711. *A secular bird.*] As a secular bird. *Secular* means centurial ; lasting for a hundred years. *Bird* is here an independent nominative.

*Ages.*] For or through ages.

1717. *The sons of Caphtor.*] The Philistines were called Caphtorim, as having come originally from Caphtor. Deut. ii. 23. Some suppose that Caphtor was in India: others think it was the island Crete.

1725. *To wail.*] For to wail.

1726. *Knock the breast.*] As the publican in the parable. St. Luke xviii. 13. So in Spenser's *F. Q. I. i. 29*, 'And often knocked his breast, as one that did repent.'

*No contempt, &c.*] Nothing to contempt, &c.

1727. *Nothing but well, &c.*] Nothing in so noble a death but, &c.

1732. *With what speed the while.*] With what speed can be

Gaza is not in plight to say us nay—  
 Will send for all my kindred, all my friends,  
 To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend, 1735  
 With silent obsequy and funeral train,  
 Home to his father's house. There will I build him  
 A monument, and plant it round with shade  
 Of laurel ever-green and branching palm,  
 With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled 1740  
 In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.  
 Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,  
 And from his memory inflame their breasts,  
 To matchless valour and adventures high;  
 The virgins also shall, on feastful days, 1745  
 Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing  
 His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,  
 From whence captivity and loss of eyes.  
*Chor.* All is best, though we oft doubt,  
 What the unsearchable dispose 1750  
 Of Highest Wisdom brings about,  
 And ever best found in the close.  
 Oft He seems to hide his face,  
 But unexpectedly returns;  
 And to his faithful champion hath in place 1755  
 Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns,  
 And all that band them to resist

used during the while.

1734. *Will send for all, &c.*] 'Then his brethren, and all the house of his father came down and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burying-place of Manoah his father.' Judges xvi. 31.

1735. *Attend.*] To attend him.

1749. *All is best, &c.*] All is

best, and in the close is ever found to be best, though, &c.

1755. *In place.*] In this place; here. The phrase is often used by Spenser for *in this place*, or *in that place*. Thus, in the *Faery Queene*, I. ii. 38, 'Then was she fair alone, when none was fair in place;' and iii. 37, 'Dear sir, whatever that thou be in place.'

1757. *That band them.*] That band themselves; that are banded



His uncontrollable intent.

His servants He, with new acquist

Of true experience from this great event,

1760

With peace and consolation hath dismissed,

And calm of mind, all passion spent.

together. Acts xxiii. 12, 'Certain of the Jews banded together,' &c.

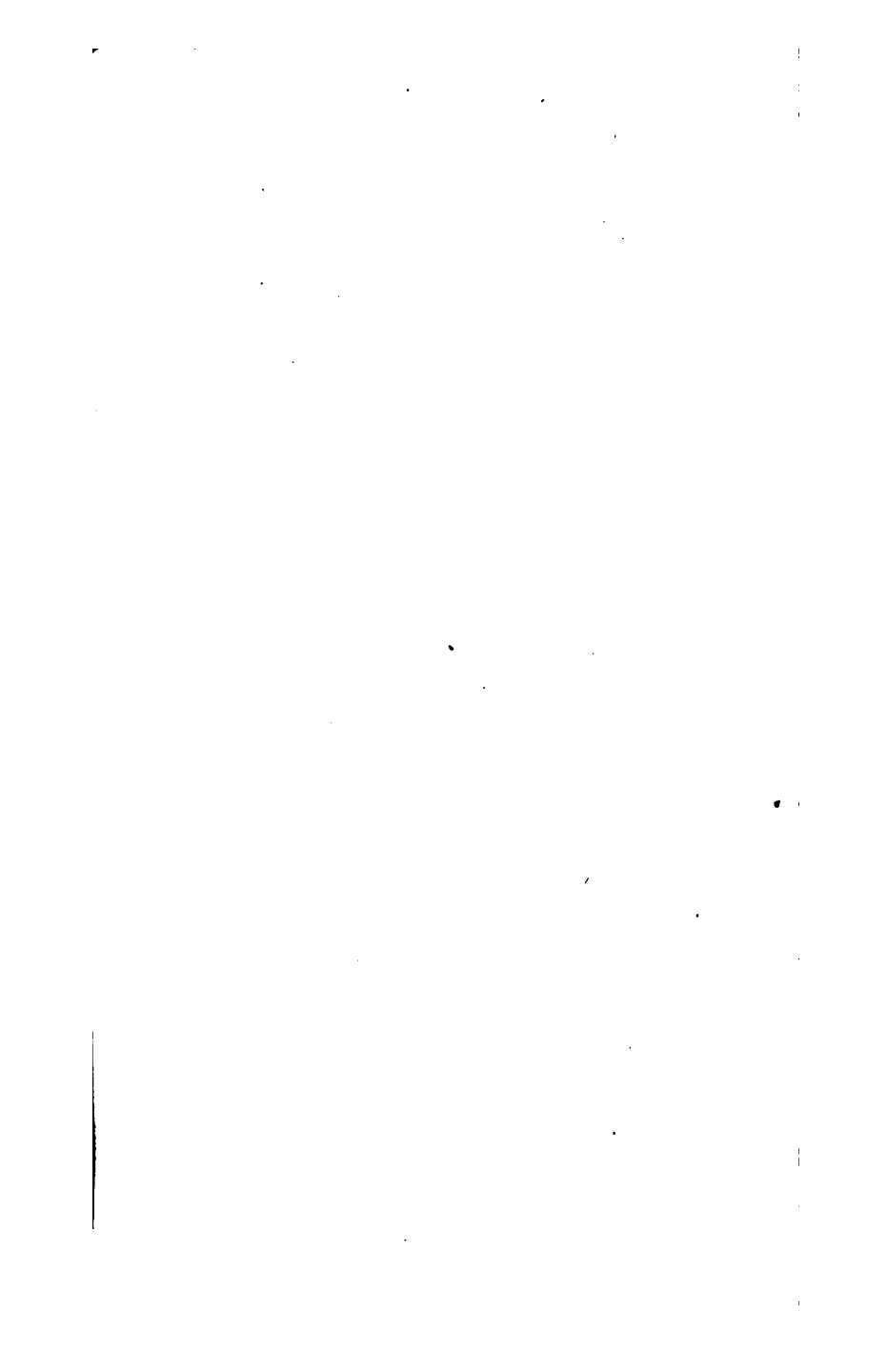
1759. *His servants He, &c.*] He hath dismissed, with peace and consolation and calm of mind, all passion (being) spent, His servants, (benefited) with new acquist of true experience

from this great event. *His servants* means the Chorus and the other friends present. *Acquist* is acquisition; the more usual form in our old authors is *acquest*, analogous to *request*, *inquest*, &c.

1762. *Passion.*] Agitation of mind.

LYCIDAS.

▲ MONODY.



## LYCIDAS.

*In this MONODY the author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, 1637; and by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height.*

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more  
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,  
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,  
And with forced fingers rude  
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year. 5  
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,  
Compels me to disturb your season due;

1. *Yet once more, &c.*] From this exordium it seems probable that politics had already begun to alienate Milton's time from poetry. He was solicited to write these tributary verses; and had it not been for such solicitation, *Comus* perhaps might have closed the list of his juvenile poems. By bearing in mind that he was thus called upon, in the midst of other studies, to 'meditate the muse,' in honour of such a youth as Edward King, we can account for his saying, 'Yet once more—I come,'—'Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear compels me,'—'Who would not sing for Lycidas!' and again at line 18, 'Hence

with denial vain and coy excuse; So may some gentle Muse,' &c.

*O ye laurels, &c.*] Perhaps the laurels were in honour of King's poetical genius, the myrtles to express love's sorrow for his premature death, and the ivy to honour his learning.

5. *Shatter your leaves, &c.*] 'Here,' says Warton, 'is an inaccuracy of the poet. The *mellowing year* could not affect the leaves of the laurel, the myrtle, and the ivy; which last is characterised as *never sere*.'

7. *To disturb, &c.*] To disturb the season that is due to you, or in which you should be left undisturbed.

For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,  
 Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.  
 Who would not sing for Lycidas! he knew  
 Himself to sing, and build the lofty rime.  
 He must not float upon his watery bier  
 Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,  
 Without the meed of some melodious tear.

10

Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well,  
 That from beneath the seat of Jove deth spring;  
 Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.  
 Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse—  
 So may some gentle Muse  
 With lucky words favour my destined urn,  
 And as he passes turn,  
 And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud—

15

20

10. *He knew himself to sing.*] An imitation of Latin construction: '*Reddere qui voces jam scit puer.*' Horace, *Art. Poet.* 158.

11. *Build the lofty rhyme.*] *Build* has reference to the regular structure of verse. *Rhyme* here means verse in general, as it does also in *Par. Lost*, i. 16, 'Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.'

13. *Welter.*] Rollabout. 'These wisards welter in wealth's waves,' Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* (*July*).

14. *Melodious tear.*] Tearful melody; plaintive elegy.

15. *Sisters of the sacred well, &c.*] The Muses were nine, daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne. Spenser, in the first stanza of his 'Teares of the Muses,' invokes 'the sacred Sisters nine,' that sit 'beside the silver springs of Helicon.' In Mount Helicon was the Muses' fountain Hippo-

crene, to which Milton here refers. Its springing 'from beneath the seat of Jove,' refers perhaps to the circumstance of Jupiter being worshipped on Helicon. The oracular temple of Jupiter Trophonius was near Helicon.

17. *Loudly.*] That is, in lamentation; or perhaps, in praises.

18. *Coy.*] Hesitating.

19. *Muse.*] Bard.

20. *With lucky words.*] With words fortunate for my memory.

*My destined urn.*] That termination of life to which I am destined. This is prompted by reflection on the manner of King's death.

22. *Bid fair peace, &c.*] Wish or pray that gentle peace be, &c. To *bid* originally meant to pray; and *beads* meant prayers, before it came to signify the instruments by which prayers were counted.

*My sable shroud.*] The darkness that covers me.

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,  
 Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill;  
 Together both, ere the high lawns appeared      25  
 Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,  
 We drove a-field, and both together heard  
 What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,  
 Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,  
 Oft till the star that rose, at evening, bright      30  
 Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.  
 Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,  
 Tempered to the oaten flute;  
 Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel  
 From the glad sound would not be absent long,      35  
 And old Dametas loved to hear our song.

But oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,  
 Now thou art gone, and never must return!  
 Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,  
 With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,      40  
 And all their echoes mourn.  
 The willows, and the hazel-copses green,  
 Shall now no more be seen  
 Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.  
 As killing as the canker to the rose,      45

27. *We drove a-field.*] We drove  
 'the same flock' out to pasture.

*Heard what time the gray-fly.*]   
 Listened when the trumpet-fly.  
*What time—at what time,* is ad-  
 verbial to *winds*.

30. *The star that rose, &c.*]   
 The star that rose bright at  
 evening, viz. Hesperus, a mascu-  
 line appellation for the planet  
 Venus. It was called Lucifer in  
 the morning.

31. *Westering.*] Moving west-  
 ward.

33. *Tempered.*] Accommo-

dated; attuned. So in Spenser's  
*Shepherd's Calendar* (June),  
 'Where birds of every kind to  
 the waters' fall their tunes at-  
 temper right.'

37. *Now.*] Now that.

39. *Thee, shepherd, &c.*] The  
 style here is in imitation of pas-  
 sages in Virgil and Ovid. See  
 Ovid, *Met.* xi. 44, and Virgil,  
*Ecl.* i. 39; *Æn.* ix. 427. So  
 Spenser, *F. Q.* IV. x. 44, 'Thee,  
 goddess, thee the winds, the clouds  
 do fear.'

Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,  
 Or frost to flowers that their gay wardrobe wear  
 When first the white-thorn blows;  
 Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep 50  
 Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?

For neither were ye playing on the steep,  
 Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,  
 Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,  
 Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream. 55  
 Ay me, I fondly dream!

Had ye been there—for what could that have done?  
 What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,  
 The Muse herself for her enchanting son,  
 Whom universal Nature did lament, 60  
 When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,

49. *Tb.*] When announced to.

50. *Nymphs.*] Water nymphs, like the Nereids.

52. *The steep, &c.*] From Camden's *Britannia* it would seem that the poet here refers to the Druid sepulchres at *Kerig y Druidion*, in the mountains of Denbighshire.

54. *The shaggy top, &c.*] The wooded heights of Anglesea, anciently called Mona, a stronghold of the Druids. Warton and others take Mona to be the Isle of Man.

55. *Where Deva, &c.*] Deva is the Dee, an ancient boundary between England and Wales. It was supposed to foretell and divine by changing its fords, and was regarded with hallowing veneration. *Wizard stream* signifies divining or prophetic stream.

Warton says, 'The mountains of Denbighshire, the isle of Man,

and the banks of the Dee, are in the vicinity of the Irish seas where Lycidas was shipwrecked. It is thus Theocritus asks the Nymphs, how it came to pass that, when Daphnis died, they were not in the delicious vales of Peneus, or on the banks of the great torrent Anapus, the sacred water of Acis, or on the summits of mount Ætna; because all these were the haunts of the habitation of the shepherd Daphnis.'

56. *Ay me!*] The old expression for Ah me!

57. *Had ye been there, &c.*] The order is, For what could that have done, had ye been there? Spenser and Shakspeare were much addicted to such inversions of ordinary arrangement.

58. *The Muse.*] Calliope was the mother of Orpheus.

61. *The rout, &c.*] The

His gory visage down the stream was sent,  
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore !

Alas ! what boots it with incessant care  
To tend the homely, slighted shepherd's trade, 65  
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse ?  
Were it not better done, as others use,  
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,  
Or with the tangles of Nessera's hair ?  
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise— 70  
That last infirmity of noble mind—  
To scorn delights, and live laborious days ;  
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,  
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,  
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears, 75  
And slits the thin-spun life. ' But not the praise,'  
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears,

Thracian women who, while celebrating the orgies of Bacchus, tore Orpheus in pieces, and threw his head into the Hebrus, a river of Thrace. Shaksp. *Mids. N. Dream*, v. 1, refers to 'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals, tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.'

63. *To the Lesbian shore.*] To the shore of Lesbos, an island in the Ægean sea.

66. *And strictly meditate, &c.*] And devotedly engage the mind in the thankless task of poetical composition. To *meditate the Muse* is an expression echoing Virgil :—

*Stivestrem tenui musam meditante avena.*  
Ecl. i. 2.  
*Agrestem tenui meditabor arundine musam.*  
Ecl. vi. 2.

68. *Amaryllis, &c.*] *Amaryllis*, *Nessera*, *Dametas*, &c. are pas-

toral names in the first three *Elogues* of Virgil.

70. *The clear spirit.*] *Clear* means pure.

71. *That last infirmity, &c.*] The desire of fame had been, before Milton's time, described as that fond feeling which longest retains influence on noble minds. This Milton seems to recognise by the demonstrative *that*.

75. *The blind Fury.*] The three Fates were *Clotho*, *Lachesis*, and *Atropos*. It is the last of these whom the poet calls 'the blind Fury' because at random she cuts the thread of life which *Lachesis* spins, while *Clotho* holds the distaff.

76. *Thin-spun.*] This epithet has reference to the great insecurity of man's life.

77. *Touched, &c.*] '*Cynthius aurem vellit et admonuit.*' Virgil,



'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
Nor in the glistering foil  
Set-off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies, 80  
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes  
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;  
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,  
Of so much fame in Heaven expect thy meed.'

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honoured flood, 85  
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,  
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.  
But now my oat proceeds,  
And listens to the herald of the sea,

*Ecl.* vi. 3. 'Vellit aurem' is a figurative expression signifying that the poet was admonished or attracted to listen.

79. *Glistering foil.*] A foil was a piece of gold or silver leaf, placed under a transparent gem, to set it off to advantage.

82. *Perfect witness.*] That thorough and accurate discernment.

85. *O fountain Arethuse, &c.*] 'While the poet, in the character of a shepherd, is moralising on the uncertainty of human life, Phœbus interposes with a sublime strain, above the tone of pastoral poetry. He then hastily recollects himself, and apologises to his rural Muse, or, in other words, to Arethusa and Mincius, the celebrated streams of Bucolic song, for having so suddenly departed from pastoral allusions, and the tenor of his subject.' WARTON.

Arethusa was a nymph of Elis, in Peloponnesus, and one of Diana's attendants. While one day bathing in the Alpheus, a river flowing through Elis into

the sea, the god of the river became enamoured of her, and pursued her till she was changed into a fountain by Diana, who opened a secret passage through which the stream disappeared till it rose in Ortygia, a small island near Syracuse. Ancient tradition affirmed that the Alpheus passed under the sea, without mingling with the salt waters, and rose again in Ortygia to join the stream Arethusa. See Ovid, *Met.* v. 10.

The Mincius, now Mincio, a river of Venetia, flowing into the Po, is here called an 'honoured flood,' and said to be 'crowned with vocal reeds,' because the birthplace of Virgil was on its banks. Theocritus, the Greek pastoral poet, was born at Syracuse.

88. *But now my oat proceeds.*] But now my rural muse resumes.

89. *The herald, &c.*] Triton, who came in defence of Neptune, to ascertain how it was that 'the remorseless deep closed o'er the head of Lycidas.'

That came in Neptune's plea. 90  
 He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,  
 What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?  
 And questioned every gust of rugged wings  
 That blows from off each beaked promontory.  
 They knew not of his story; 95  
 And sage Hippotades their answer brings,  
 That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed;  
 The air was calm, and on the level brine  
 Sleek Panopè with all her sisters played.  
 It was that fatal and perfidious bark, 100  
 Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,  
 That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.  
 Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,  
 His mantle hairy and his bonnet sedge,  
 Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge 105  
 Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.  
 'Ah! who hath reft,' quoth he, 'my dearest pledge?'

91. *The felon winds.*] The ravaging and life-destroying tempests.

96. *Sage Hippotades.*] The wise controller of the winds, Æolus, son of Hippotas.

Æolon Hippotaden cohilhentem carcera ventos.—Ovid, *Met.* xiv. 224

99. *Panopè.*] Panope, or Panopea, was one of the Nereids.

*Mxit: eumque imis sub fluctibus audis omnis Nereidum Phorciqne chorus, Panopeaque virgo.* Virgil, *Æn.* v. 330.

100. *It was that fatal, &c.*] It was not a storm that caused the death of Lycidas: it was the crazed state of the vessel. *Fatal* here means *appointed by destiny*.

101. *Built in the eclipse, &c.*] The time of the moon's eclipse

was supposed favourable to the malignant designs of witchcraft. In Shaksp. *Macbeth*, iv. 1, among the ingredients of the witches' caldron are 'slips of yew slivered in the moon's eclipse.'

103. *Next Camus.*] After Phœbus came Camus, the river god of the Cam at Cambridge.

104. *Sedge.*] Of sedge leaves.

105. *Inwrought, &c.*] Having shadowy forms of death wrought upon it, and words of woe inscribed on the edge, like that flower into which the blood of the youth Hyacinthus was changed, and which bore the marks of lamentation, *ai! ai!*

*Ipsæ suos gemitus foliis inscribit; et ai! ai! Flores habet inscriptum.*—Ovid, *Met.* x. 215.

Last came, and last did go,  
 The pilot of the Galilean lake;  
 Two massy keys he bore of metals twain— 110  
 The golden opes, the iron shuts amain.  
 He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:  
 'How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,  
 Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,  
 Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold! 115  
 Of other care they little reckoning make,  
 Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,  
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest.  
 Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold  
 A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least 120  
 That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!  
 What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;  
 And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs  
 Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;  
 The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed, 125  
 But, swollen with wind and the rank mist they draw,

109. *The pilot, &c.*] St. Peter is here introduced as the apostle who formed the first Christian church, and who received from Christ the power of the keys. Acts ii. 41, 42; Matth. xvi. 19.

111. *The golden opes, &c.*] The golden key opens the gate of heaven, the iron key shuts forcibly the gate of hell.

113. *How well, &c.*] How well could I, for thy life, have given up an ample number of those who, &c.

114. *Enow* was formerly used in relation to numerical quantity, and was distinguished from *enough*, just as *many* is from *much*.

115. *And climb into the fold.*]

A reference to John x. 1. So in *Par. Lost*, iv. 193:—

So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold:  
 So since into his church lewd hirelings climb.

121. *Herdman's art.*] Pastor's duty.

122. *What recks it them.*] What does it reck them? an old impersonal usage for *what do they reckon?* that is, What reckoning or account do they make?

*They are sped.*] They have sped; they have gained their object.

123. *Their lean, &c.*] They grate, or play harshly, their lean and flashy songs on their scrannel, or thin and meagre, pipes.

Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread ;  
 Beside what the grim wolf with privy paw  
 Daily devours apace, and nothing said.  
 But that two-handed engine at the door 130  
 Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.'

Return, Alphetis, the dread voice is past  
 That shrunk thy streams ; return, Sicilian Muse,  
 And call the vales, and bid them hither cast  
 Their bells, and flowerets of a thousand hues. 135  
 Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use  
 Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks ;  
 On whose fresh lap the swart-star sparsely looks :  
 Throw hither all your quaint-enamelled eyes,  
 That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers, 140  
 And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.  
 Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,

128. *The grim wolf.*] Popery ; to which Archbishop Laud was supposed to be favourable.

129. *Nothing said.*] Nothing is said against it ; it is connived at.

130. *That two-handed engine, &c.*] Warton says 'In these lines our author anticipates the execution of Archbishop Laud by a *two-handed engine*, that is, the axe ; insinuating that his death would remove all grievances in religion, and complete the reformation of the church.' 'Now, therefore, let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.' 1 Samuel xxvi. 8. Perhaps the poet in a more general way refers to what Christ said about the axe being laid to the root of the trees.

133. *Sicilian Muse.*] The

island Ortygia, where the Alpheus joined the Arethusa, belonged to ancient Sicily. Perhaps Milton was here remembering Syracuse as the birthplace of the Greek pastoral poet Theocritus. The Dorians who emigrated from Greece to Sicily were the first cultivators of purely pastoral poetry.

136. *Use.*] Are wont to be. So Spenser, *F. Q.* VI. Introd. 2, 'Strange ways where foot did never use.'

138. *The swart-star.*] 'The dog-star is called the *swart-star*, by turning the effect into the cause. *Swart* is swarthy, brown, &c.'—WARTON.

142. *The rathe primrose.*] The old word *rathe* meant early or soon ; comparative *rather*, earlier or sooner. So in Chaucer's *Shipman's Tale*, 'What aileth you so rathe to arise ?' Udall's *Roister*

The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,  
 The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet, 145  
 The glowing violet,  
 The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,  
 With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,  
 And every flower that sad embroidery wears;  
 Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,  
 And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150  
 To strew the laureate herse where Lycid lies.—  
 For so, to interpose a little ease,  
 Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise,  
 Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas  
 Wash far away.—Where'er thy bones are hurled; 155  
 Whether beyond the stormy Helbrides,  
 Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide  
 Visitest the bottom of the monstrous world;  
 Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,

*Doister*, iii. 5, 'All the stock thou comest of, later or rather;' Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* (*February*), 'The rather lambs be starved with cold.'

*That forsaken dies.*] That dies left in the shade, neglected, unvisited by the sun. Milton had first written, 'That unwedded dies;' the thought being from Shaksp. *Winter's Tale*, iv. 3, 'Pale primroses that die unmarried, ere they can behold bright Phœbus in his strength.' Why the primrose is said to die unmarried is, according to Warton, 'because it grows in the shade, uncherished or unseen by the sun, which was supposed to be in love with some sorts of flowers.' The sun-flower was sometimes called the sun's spouse, because of going to sleep and waking

with the sun.

144. *Freaked.*] Variegated.

151. *Laureate herse.*] The herse of one who had obtained an academical degree. The *Baccalaureate* is the degree of Bachelor of Arts. In giving Lycidas a 'laureate herse' Milton wishes us, as he says, in the next line but one, to 'dally with false surmise.'

152. *So to.*] In order to.

158. *The monstrous world.*] The world of waters with its inhabiting monsters. 'Et quæ marmoreo fert monstra sub æquore pontus.' Virgil, *Æn.* vi. 729.

159. *Moist vows.*] This seems to mean *tearful vows*. But perhaps there is implied some allusion to votive promises of thanksgivings and offerings made to

Sleepest by the fable of Bellerus old, 160  
 Where the great Vision of the guarded Mount  
 Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold :  
 Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth,  
 And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more, 165  
 For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,  
 Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.  
 So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
 And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
 And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore 170  
 Flames in the forehead of the morning sky :  
 So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high  
 Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,  
 Where, other groves and other streams along,  
 With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves, 175

Neptune, that he might give up the body of the drowned youth to his friends.

160. *The fable of Bellerus old.*] The promontory of Bellerium, at Land's End, so named from the fabled Cornish giant Bellerus.

161. *The great Vision, &c.*] The great Vision is the angel St. Michael. The guarded or fortified Mount is St. Michael's Mount, near the Land's End in Cornwall. A craggy seat in this Mount was called St. Michael's Chair. Warton says, 'There is still a tradition that a Vision of St. Michael seated on this crag appeared to some hermits, and that this circumstance occasioned the foundation of the monastery dedicated to St. Michael.'

162. *Looks towards Namancos, &c.*] Namancos and the castle

of Bayona were in Galicia, near Cape Finisterre.

163. *Look homeward, &c.*] 'O Angel, look no longer seaward, look landward, look towards your own coast now, and view with pity the corpse of the shipwrecked Lycidas floating thither.'—WARTON.

169. *Repairs.*] Recovers from declension or fatigue.

170. *Tricks.*] Sets off in array. So in *Il Penseroso*, l. 123, 'Not tricked and frownced as she was wont.'

*Ore.*] Gold. Lat. *aurum*; Fr. *or*.

'Like some ore among a mineral of metals base.' Shakspeare, *Hamlet*, iv. 1.

172. *Sunk.*] This is the past tense, for *sank*.

175. *His oozy locks he laves.*] He washes away the sea ooze from his locks.

And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,  
 In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.  
 There entertain him all the saints above,  
 In solemn troops and sweet societies,  
 That sing, and singing in their glory move, 180  
 And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.  
 Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;  
 Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,  
 In thy large recompense, and shalt be good  
 To all that wander in that perilous flood. 185

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,  
 While the still Morn went out with sandals gray;  
 He touched the tender stops of various quills,  
 With eager thought warbling his Doric lay;  
 And now the sun had stretched out all the hills, 190  
 And now was dropped into the western bay.  
 At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue;  
 To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

176. *The unexpressive nuptial song.*] See Rev. xix. 9. *Unexpressive* is for *inexpressible*, unutterable. So in Shaksp. *As you Like it*, iii. 2, 'The fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she.' Compare *Jul. Cæs.* ii. 1, 'The insuppressive metal of our spirits.'

184. *In thy large recompense.*] As thy great compensation.

186. *Uncouth.*] Unpolished.

188. *Quills.*] Reeds or pipes.

189. *His Doric lay.*] Theocritus, from whose *Idylls* Milton borrowed the name *Lycidas*, wrote in the Doric dialect.

190. *The sun had stretched out, &c.*] The setting sun had stretched to the utmost the shadows of the hills.

192. *Twitched.*] Plucked round him.

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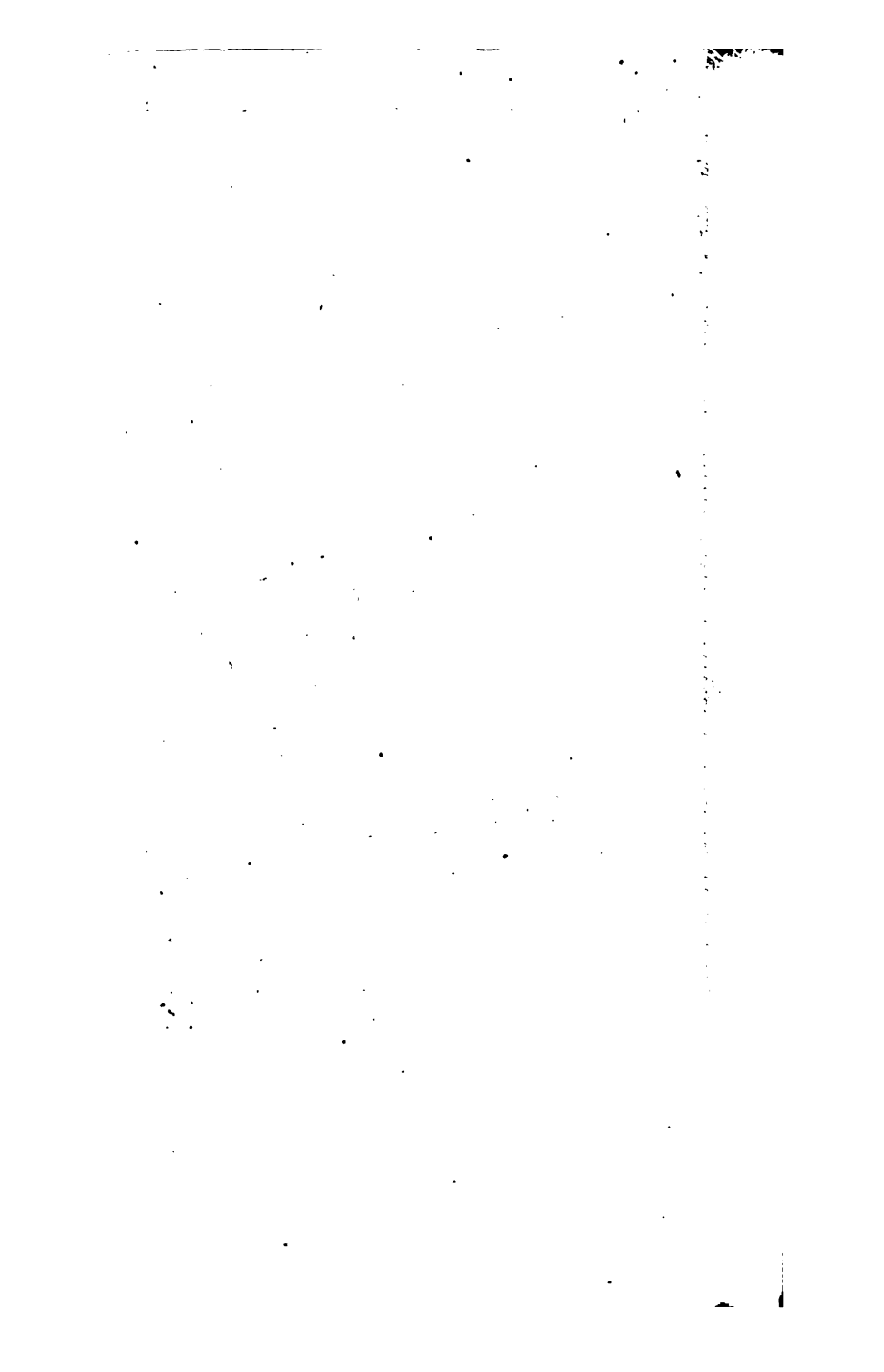
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